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3 Vols

3 Vols

Mysteries Elucidated

Vide Vol. 2. Page 70.

MYSTERIES

ELUCIDATED,

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

DANISH MASSACRE, MONMOUTH, &c.

Anne Maria Mackenzie.

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TO THE READERS OF

MODERN ROMANCE.

AS many opinions have lately been promulgated, reſpecting the innovations upon (I would rather ſay, *amendment of*) ANCIENT ROMANCE, blaming, on the one hand, every attempt to reduce the monſter to a more reaſonable ſtandard; and on the other, depriving him of the moſt

moſt neceſſary traits of his former dignity; a few remarks upon the ſubject may perhaps be admitted, without the imputation of officiouſneſs, as they will neither be embittered by impertinent reflection, nor malevolent ſatire: but as it is a cauſe made really important to the female world, by its influence and effects, I ſhall venture to give my own ſenſe of it, as adopted through long and frequent conſideration, and in this place I muſt beg leave to obſerve the progreſſion and perverſion of ſuch alterations.

That ſpecies of romance, which for many years had called for the pruning hand of reaſon, and even common ſenſe, became at laſt ſo unaccountably prevalent, as to exclude any attention in its admirers, to more elegant literature.

In

In Spain, its power was ſo abſurdly acknowledged, as to reach even the lower claſs of people; but the truly excellent CERVANTES, by the publication of his inimitable QUIXOTE, gave, I believe, the firſt ſhock to this enchanted fabric, nor could it ever after regain its former ſtrength, faſcination, or magnificence.

The keen and well adapted ridicule of that uſeful work, was not confined to his nation; the well pointed ſhafts ſtruck deep into its exiſtence every where.

In England, if I miſtake not, its downfall was aſſiſted by ſome of the beautiful periodical writings, produced by a few of the greateſt wits this iſland ever boaſted, and by the efforts of ſeveral authors of a later date, as emi-

nent in their line, a new ſource of amuſement was ſtruck out, at the head of which, FIELDING and RICHARDSON ſtood pre-eminent; but unfortunately, their numerous copyiſts (many of them however) by the coarſeneſs of their materials, groſs colouring, and barrenneſs of juſt ideas, added to their ignorance of grouping character, in a great meaſure ſpoilt the deſigns of the excellent originals; the one claſs by judicious transformation, preſented a new fund of entertainment to the imagination, without violating the dictates of reaſon and good ſenſe, while the other inflamed the paſſions which ancient romance, by its lofty flights, ſeemed intended to raiſe above the pitch of humanity.

In tracing the diſgrace of that formidable ſpirit of chivalry, as it ſtood in

in the ſlight dreſs of the fantaſtic novel, (always excepting thoſe writings which have improved, rather than deſtroyed, a taſte for ſuch productions) I have ſometimes fancied it to be thus affected.

. . . . . .

When, from the gigantic ſtilts of ancient romance, the warlike knight was obliged abruptly to deſcend; when *he* who erſt for ſeven years ſubſiſted, even upon the glance of a lightning darting eye—a chaſte ſalute of the alabaſter finger tip, (cold emblem of the frozen virgin's heart) or fed his high form'd hopes with the expectation of obtaining grace, by the conqueſt of dragons and necromancers; when he, I repeat, was plunged from his air-built caſtle,

and (*ſore alternative*) was doomed either to inglorious obſcurity, or act the part of a libertine lover, an inſignificant beau, or modern enamorato; no wonder he miſtook the road to fame, or turned aſide into the path of ridicule.

The princeſs too, who once held her beautiful and ſacred perſon at an awful diſtance, 'till her gallant defender had cut his way to her fortified priſon, through the whole phalanx of horrible beings, brought into exiſtence by the heated brain, and diſtorted fancy of miſtaken writers; either not knowing him under the mighty change, or finding ſhe muſt give up every hope of future celebrity, unleſs, trying her chance in a new ſituation, ſhe weighs the difference, and quietly conſents to enter the ſame road, ſubſtituting

croſs

croſs guardians for *cruel dragons*—*travelling chaiſes* for *flying chariots*—and vulgar *poſt boys* for *roſy cupids*—the *maſſy gates*, *grated windows*, and *impervious walls* vaniſh from the diſenchanted eye, and the lady finds herſelf obliged to accept the common aſſiſtance of a *waiting maid*, to effect her eſcape, happy if ſhe can retain ſo much of her former conſequence, as to leap from the open ſaſh to the arms of her expecting lover.

Perhaps the reader now expects every difficulty to ſubſide—no ſuch thing, for there have been inſtances, when the *ſweet maiden*, while one pretty foot preſſes the ſtep of the carriage, her hand clasp'd by her vehement adorer, her eye tenderly and *baſhfully*, I will not ſay *modeſtly*, becauſe *that* is a term unſuitable to the preſent deſcription; baſhfully

fully then averted from his ardent looks, finds every rapturous expectation moſt barbarouſly deſtroyed by the appearance of an enraged parent, who daring to conceive himſelf injured in the moſt delicate point, ſcruples not to ſnatch the *fainting inſenſible* from the arms of her diſappointed *Duke*, *Baron*—or at leaſt *Baronet*—nay, even here the calamity ends not—another and more ſucceſsful elopement takes place, and horrible to ſay, ſome hideous *dragon* in the form of *a decent elderly lady*, trepans the innocent victim, and inflicts every ſpecies of puniſhment, even to the dire arreſt and diſmal ſpunging-houſe, as *her* mode of revenge for the affront ſhe receives from this paragon of virtue, who at length is emancipated by the intervention of ſome noble ſtranger, and ſo on * * * to the end of the chapter.

That

That the general run of novels have this ſort of tendency, I believe every ſubſcriber to a Circulating Library can witneſs; (but with the ſincereſt admiration of their talents, let me exclude the names of Burney, Bennet, Parſons, &c. from a ſhare in the cenſure, whoſe elegant performances will, I truſt, remove much of the contempt which has fallen upon works of this denomination;) and though the following obſervation may poſſibly be deemed an anachroniſm, yet I will venture to remark, that as it was not in the power comparatively of a few individuals to deſtroy, or even ſucceſsfully oppoſe, ſuch a formidable body, it was thought expedient to attempt a middle kind of writing, founded too upon hiſtorical facts, neither ſo improbable (*impoſſible* might ſound as well) as the one, nor ſo

dangerous

dangerous to the young and indiſcriminating as the other.

The ſucceſs of the *Receſs*, *Warbeck*, *Monmouth*, the *Daniſh Maſſacre*, *Duke of Clarence*, founded on particular periods in the hiſtory of this country, and one or two more, have proved the utility of the undertaking, and ladies are contented to be intereſted and improved, without being terrified.

V

But another modern genius has lately out-ſoared them all, and ſcorning the track of more moderate predeceſſors, has contrived to give her ſtory the higheſt colouring of unfettered invention, by a choice of fictious ſubjects, which naturally affords a greater latitude to the excentricities of a brilliant imagination, ſpurning the trammels of ſober reaſon,

and

and forcing, as it were, the willing ſlave of terror, to adopt the enthuſiaſm of ideas, which, like the deſcription they are cloath'd in, are all wild, vaſt, and terrific.

But while I would give all due praiſe to the merit of theſe deſigns, ſome objection ſeems to obtain againſt the general tenor of them: that they are really wonderful, I readily grant, but if the ſpirit of deſcription can only be kept up by a ſucceſſion of bold and horrible images, there is ſome reaſon to fear unhappy effects on the young and ductile mind. Indeed, were I poſſeſſed of powers equal to that truly ingenious author, I ſhould be cautious of giving them that unbounded licence. Let every myſtery thicken in the progreſs of the ſtory, 'till the whole is elucidated,

ed, but let it be without the intervention of ſuper, or preternatural appearances. Dreams and apparitions ſavour too much of the ſuperſtition which ought never to be encouraged; and indeed I was happy to ſee, in that author's laſt voluminous publication, an amendment of this error.

As it may be deemed preſumptuous in one, whoſe powers of imagination are certainly inferior to thoſe of this writer, to cavil at what has given ſuch works much of their celebrity, I will endeavour to obviate the charge, by remarking, that as in every performance there muſt be a *ſombre* tint, ſo it will be but a fair and common concluſion to obſerve, that nothing can be abſolutely perfect.

In hiſtorical traits, the objection before hinted, appears yet ſtronger, and though I am well aware, that the ſuperſtition of former times, may give an air of plauſibility to deſcriptions of this nature, yet its effects will not be leſs impreſſive on the tender mind, perhaps the more ſo, from the ſuppoſition of its being founded upon facts, though I think it does not ſet them many degrees above *Baker's Chronicle*, or *God's Revenge againſt Murder*.

It is extremely clear, from what I have formerly attempted, and what I have now ventured to lay before the public, that in my idea, hiſtorical anecdotes are the moſt proper vehicles for the elucidation of myſteries; but it clearly behoves an author to be careful in the choice of ſubjects, always pre-

miſing, for inſtruction's ſake, that they ſhall be choſen from ſuch as offer a deſcription of vice in her proper garb, puniſhed by the ſucceſs of her deteſtable operations, while virtue, if it triumph not in the rewards of merit here, ſhall be painted in colours ſoft enough to allure the attention, and, if poſſible, inſpire the emulation of young and well diſpoſed readers: and here, another obſervation or two ariſes from the uſe made of the preſent mode of amuſement, though I ſhall firſt obſerve, that to the combination of myſterious and perplexed events, the following ſheets will witneſs; but I thought it a duty abſolutely owing to thoſe who may honour them with a peruſal, to avoid even the ſuppoſition of viſionary figures; and though, in ſo doing, it may appear as an open reflection upon the many, who follow-

ing

ing the maſterly hints already thrown out by their great original,* have dyed their walls in blood—given life to pictures—diſturbed the inhabitants of the ſilent grave—drag'd from his peaceful bed the airy form, to appear againſt the monſters who had deſtroyed an innocent family—nay, the enchanted glade —the ruined chapel, with all the perturbed elements which are brought in, to complete the horrid ſcene; yet I ſhall be better ſatisfied to eſcape the cenſure of the prudent, than to derive fame by my ſucceſs, in alarming the timid: to excite wonder is one thing, to incur contempt another; nor can it reflect any credit upon an author, who proſtitutes his own reaſon, and his reader's judgment, to the profits of his pen.

* Walpole, in his Caſtle of Otranto.

A licen-

A licentious novel may ſully the purity of a lady's ideas, while the unnatural performances of the petty modern romance, claims almoſt equal power of doing miſchief; ſo that between both, the head and the heart muſt be in a dangerous ſtate.

And that this important conſideration may affect every one, who poſſeſſing the writing influenza, have yet their materials to ſelect, is the ſincere and earneſt wiſh of,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your grateful and obedient ſervant,

ANNA MARIA MACKENZIE.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

CAROLINE

PRINCESS OF WALES.

MADAM,

AT a time when the fire of a juſt and generous enthuſiaſm on a late HAPPY EVENT, *continues to pervade the moſt diſtant parts of the* BRITISH EMPIRE, *it is poſſible that an humble candidate for a few hours attention, may admit of excuſe, for thus daringly taking advantage of general report, which announces your*

ROYAL

ROYAL HIGHNESS'S *affability to equal the luſtre of your preſent ſtation, and your future claim.*

To deny that this addreſs has been actuated with the warm hope of exciting approbation from a GRACIOUS PRINCESS *for the following ſheets, would be an abſurdity, which the whole tenor of it poſitively contradicts: it would be a duplicity unworthy of one who ſoars to* ROYAL NOTICE; *but to claim any merit from the performance, independent of the ſubject, and an attempt to dreſs virtue in her proper colours, is totally oppoſite to the ſenſe I entertain of my own inſufficiency.*

Perhaps the affecting cataſtrophe of a PRINCE, *a predeceſſor of* YOUR BELOVED AND ILLUSTRIOUS CONSORT, *who was not more innocent than unhappy, may be deemed a ſubject too gloomy for the contemplation of a delicate and feeling mind; particularly as his ſufferings have been faithfully*

faithfully delineated, to preſent him before our own age as an object of the livelieſt pity: yet I muſt preſume to imagine, while the accompliſhed female may ſuffer pain from hiſtoric facts, that raiſe abhorrence of perſecution, yet the portrait will not be rejected entirely, which, though ſhaded by frailty or malevolence, ſtill betrays the triumph of virtue and thoſe lighter traits, which amuſe as they inſtruct.

Will your ROYAL HIGHNESS *permit me now to add my ardent wiſh to that of the general voice, for a continuance of thoſe bleſſings which this double alliance of the* HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK *confers on a* PRINCE AND PEOPLE, *united by thoſe indiſſoluble bonds which will* EVER—*yes, I am juſtified in repeating*——EVER *prove the ſafety and protection of theſe realms—Upon this theme, the enthuſiaſm of a ſubject and a parent, may ſurely be pardoned; for the tear which blots this page, is ſanctified by the*

the remembrance, that, to a cauſe ſo glorious as that of defending the HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK, *I have a Son devoted—who ſhares, with his gallant comrades, the honor of fighting for his* KING AND COUNTRY.

That this cauſe, which involves the protection of every thing dear to us—our virtues—our religion—our boaſted conſtitution—our very exiſtence—that this cauſe may be firmly and unanimouſly ſupported—that OUR SOVEREIGN *may long, very long rejoice in every domeſtic comfort and public affection, is the fervent hope of*

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

moſt humble,

and obedient ſervant,

London,
25th April, 1795.

A. M. MACKENZIE.

MYSTERIES ELUCIDATED.

Unſkilful he, to fawn, or ſeek for power,
By doctrines faſhion'd to the varying hours,
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize.

GOLDSMITH.

CHAP. I.

THE cold blaſts of an autumnal wind, whirled in ſhort eddies the dry leaves which ſtrewed the path leading to Lambert's cottage, and chill'd that ancient veteran's ſoul. He had been an unſucceſsful warrior, during the

minority of Edward the Firſt, and had fought, at a very early age, by the ſide of that intrepid Prince, againſt the Saracens. It was Lambert's ſingular fortune to be preſent, when an aſſaſſin attempted to ſtab the Royal youth in the Holy Land,—and to ſuch an exceſs of rage, and apprehenſion did his loyalty carry him, as to aim a death-dealing ſtroke at the wretch, whom Edward's courage had already laid lifeleſs at his feet; but notwithſtanding this, and various other inſtances of valour, Lambert remained a ſubaltern, and at the cloſe of his beloved Edward's reign, (though far advanced in years) he applied himſelf to agriculture. In this employment he was tolerably ſucceſsful, and during ſeveral years, loſt, in rural occupations, every painful idea of the miſeries of war, 'till the confuſion and anarchy in which Edward the Second's imprudence involved his ſubjects, taught Lambert and his wife to experience, in a more fatal degree, the dangers of civil enmity. Already had thoſe dangers impoveriſhed the wealthy Barons, and inflicted ſorrows, yet more

more ſevere, on their humbler-vaſſals, who, ſatisfied with their little poſſeſſions, looked not above themſelves for riches they could not conſume, nor encouraged that ambition, which could take no root in a ſoil, where temperance and induſtry only could flouriſh. Well, then, might Lambert, bending under a load of years, ſhudder at the approach of a ſeaſon, againſt the hardſhips of which, he was totally unprovided,—for he had lived to ſee his little patrimony invaded by thoſe who ought to have protected it.

Situated near the extremity of the Engliſh marches, he was equally diſtreſſed by the Scottiſh marauders, and thoſe who were ſent to quell them; and though ſheltered by Stanmore's mountaneous heights, in a vale ſecluded from common obſervation, yet had he ſeen the ſtock, his careful induſtry had raiſed, carried off, to ſupply an enemy's wants; and a granary, ſtored with the produce of his little fields, lawleſsly broken in upon by his cruel countrymen, ſo that win-

ter was haſtily advancing, without the encouraging conſolation, that its ſeverity would be ſoftened by the fruits of ſucceſsful toil.

Adela, the wife of his affection, beheld the devaſtation in ſilent ſorrow—yet the diſtreſſes ſhe would have ſubmitted to, if confined to herſelf, became truly poignant, when ſhe conſidered their conſequences were more extended.

The cold air that whiſtled along the vale, accumulated fierceneſs, from blowing over a vaſt howling waſte, to the eaſt of Lambert's cottage. He looked about, all was deſolately naked—uncultivated, bleak and dreary: to the ſouth and weſt, the proſpect was totally obſcured by deep, and in ſome parts, inacceſſible woods. Two long and narrow fields, which interpoſed between a little garden, at the back of his dwelling, and the immediate acclivities of Stanmore, preſented no better views. The heath and broom which covered thoſe hills to their feet, deprived

prived of their golden bloſſom, appeared dark and rough to his eye—while the ſtubble upon the lately reap'd land, looked ſtill more barren.

Adela preſſed the tawny hand which had ſo vainly toiled for their ſupport, and in a tone of indignation, began to murmur againſt the invaders of their property.

"They had no right to the produce of your induſtry, Lambert."

"It is all for the beſt, Adela," anſwered the old man, as he took up his bill to cut wood for fuel.

Adela wiped a tear from her eye, which followed his ſteps, 'till the trees hid him from her ſight. It was very hard, ſhe thought—her huſband had ſpent the prime of his days in the field of battle—it was ſurely hard that others ſhould ſnatch the morſel from him, who had probably fought and bled

for them. Thus meditated the melancholy matron, and caſt a deſponding look at her well-worn wheel—the flax was coarſe, and when ſpun, would fetch but little; however, ſhe recurred to her wonted ſupport; a mental ejaculation breathed from an humble ſoul, met its reward; patience and reſignation baniſhed corroding reflection, and the troubles ſhe deprecated, were but a call upon thoſe virtues for a more ſtrenuous exertion.

The riſen ſun, which now caſt his feeble rays againſt the cottage, had already meliorated the morning air;

"I wiſh," ſaid Adela, as ſhe moved her wheel nearer the window, to take advantage of thoſe warm beams that played upon the ſpindle, "I wiſh Lambert had not gone out ſo early, he might have ſtaid 'till the ſun had dried up the dew, it will certainly increaſe his cough."

This

This little apoſtrophe, addreſſed to her innocent companion, called a ſigh from Ella's boſom; the myſtery which envelop'd *her* deſtiny, was ſufficient to endear her to this venerable pair, even without the addition of her many virtues: indeed, her deſolate ſituation, pointed the pang that ſelf-love alone had not power to ſharpen; but when they reflected, that upon them alone depended Ella's comfort and ſupport, it proved almoſt too much for patience to endure, rightly judging, they ſhould ſoon be unable to provide for themſelves, the morſel neceſſary to their exiſtence.

Several years had paſſed, ſince the memorable evening, which firſt preſented to them this adopted child of their affection. The 27th of July, 1320, had been extremely ſultry, and contrary to their uſual cuſtom of retiring early, Lambert and Adela contemplated at the door of their cottage; the majeſtic appearance of a long range of clouds, extending from the ſouth to the eaſtern hori-

zon, whoſe upper parts, tinged by the ſun's laſt rays, formed a beautiful contraſt to the gloomineſs of their lower aſpect, which every moment changing, preſented a thouſand fantaſtic appearances, although they ſtill retained their voluminous bulk. With an awful pleaſure, Adela perceived the vivid lightning glancing from cloud to cloud, now burſting on the aſtoniſhed eye, in a full globular form, now darting in various narrow directions to the earth, while the wind gently riſing, waved the corn, not yet changed by the glowing heat in that northern clime, with an irregular undulating motion.

While they were thus engaged, the ſound of horſes footſteps, broke the ſolemn ſilence. Lambert liſtened, it ſeemed to come from the uncultivated track to the eaſt; ſometimes loſing itſelf in the weſtern breeze, which but feebly oppoſed the increaſing tempeſt, ſometimes clattering as though juſt by them. The good man, rather ſurpriſed at this uncommon incident, walked to the end of the field,

field, reaching beyond the extent of his houſe, and plainly diſcerned a horſe croſſing the waſte, when ſlackening its pace, it turned the corner of the looſe ſtone wall that ſurrounded the premiſes, and ſuddenly ſtopping, Lambert diſtinguiſhed a knight of Malta, the inſignia of his order glittering on his breaſt: behind him ſat a young girl, apparently in diſtreſs, covered, as it appeared, by the knight's cloak. Her ſmothered ſobs ſtruck upon Adela's feelings, but how was ſhe ſurpriſed, when the ſtranger carefully taking his charge from the horſe, abruptly cried,

"Preſerve this unfortunate relict of a noble houſe—hide her even from the bleſſed ſun—truſt her not from thy ſight—death, horrible in itſelf, but more ſo in the form it has this night overwhelmed a wretched family, threatens her tender exiſtence; her deſtiny is written in letters of blood." He ſtop'd—liſtened. "Adieu, my love," ſaid he, "hark, I am purſued," and then ſpur-

ring his ſteed, darted into the woods, and was ſeen no more.

Terrified at injunctions ſo ſolemnly given, and a confidence ſo hazardouſly placed, Lambert could ſcarcely conquer the agitation of his heart, ſo as to attempt an inveſtigation of this ſtrange myſtery. The unhappy creature could throw no light upon it—ſhe wept and groaned, with a convulſive agony—her hands claſped—her eyes at intervals lifted up, when ſhe would exclaim,

"O my murdered father! O my mother! barbarous villany! miſerable Ella! loſt, deſerted."

With a prudent forbearance, the generous couple propoſed not a ſingle queſtion relative to the cauſe of her ſufferings, but tenderly endeavoured to leſſen her exceſſive grief, and evident fatigue, by the kindeſt offices of humanity. The poor child was grateful for their attention, and in the language of eloquent

quent innocence, expreſſed her ſenſe of unreturnable obligation. They had now leiſure to remark the elegance of her manners, and the richneſs of her dreſs. Her face, diſguiſed by inceſſant weeping, appeared to ſome diſadvantage; but her perſon was tall, ſlight, and graceful; her age they found exceeded not more than thirteen years.

It was ſome days before her ſorrow admitted of the ſmalleſt mitigation: a conſciouſneſs of the trouble ſhe gave, added to the deep calamity which had thus thrown her upon ſtrangers, threw a gloomy conſtraint upon her words and actions, and ſhe would ſit for hours at a little window of their only ſpare chamber, loſt in painful contemplation; but the unremitting kindneſs of her aged proteſtors, with their aſſurance of not attempting to come at the particulars of her former ſituation, meliorated the ſharpneſs of her affliction, and left only a ſoft, and not totally unpleaſant melancholy upon her countenance, which they ſoon diſcovered to poſſeſs all that

ſweetneſs a good temper generally communicates. Often would Adela's converſation, though with a ſacred regard to this young creature's peculiar ſituation, verge towards the incident which had created in her worthy boſom an intereſt for Ella's welfare; but her ſtrong reluctance, which expreſſed itſelf in tears and ſighs, when the moſt diſtant hint was given, convinced Adela of the neceſſity of adhering to the promiſe they had made, not to dive into a myſtery, it was plain ſhe could not bear to touch upon.

The elaſticity of hope, which in very youthful minds, can rarely be ſuppreſſed, ſoon ſpread the glow of peace on Ella's cheek, and notwithſtanding the knight's remarkable injunctions, added to her own private ſenſe of danger, ſhe began, with Lambert's permiſſion, to enjoy the wild and various ſcenes around her. She had never ſeen the riſing ſun, nor could tax her memory with witneſſing that almoſt equally beautiful ſight, his ſinking below the earth: but now ſhe was daily

daily gratified with thoſe, and many other operations of ſublime nature. It was on theſe occaſions only, that ſhe ever adverted to the ſmalleſt particular, relative to her former ſtate, and once was heard to ſay, how poor was the compariſon between the grandeſt illuminated hall, and the ethereal ſplendour pouring from thoſe ſparkling ſtars, on which Lambert delighted to fix her inquiſitive eye. This, and ſimilar obſervations, while they awakened a curioſity they could not gratify, convinced the hoſpitable couple, that their ſweet companion was not only of a noble houſe, but had been bred (if not in a court) yet among perſons diſtinguiſhed for family, talents, and high accompliſhments. At times they could perceive a dignity in her manner, approaching to haughtineſs, but ſoon the latent idea, which poſſibly encouraged a momentary ſelf-appropriation of diſtinction, would ſink in deſpondency.

Thus paſſed weeks, months and years, 'till their domeſtic felicity was in ſome meaſure diſturbed

diſturbed by the rude ſhock of civil war, which, though it contracted not Lambert's generous feelings for his helpleſs charge, gave the utmoſt pain to his bountiful heart; but the compaſſion her forlorn deſtiny induced, was partly over-ruled by the cheerful patience, with which ſhe ſeemed to bear their increaſing difficulties. It is true, ſhe had now attained the age, when hope required ſtronger ſupport, and expectation is allowed a larger ſcope in the human boſom: yet what had Ella now to hope; but the continuation of her humble lot, which every day's tranſaction endangered; or what to expect but a change entirely for the worſe, ſhould her beloved friends be taken from her: ſhe ſaw, and lamented, the devaſtation of Lambert's property, for ſhe had great ſenſibility: ſhe had ſtill greater affection for her foſter parents; ſhe could reflect, ſhe could ſhudder at the melancholy proſpect, but ſhe had ſhuddered, ſhe had trembled at ſcenes of horror, to which poverty, and its attendant ills, bore no compariſon, nor ſought to heighten their anxiety

xiety by any apprehenſion for her own future fate. If Ella ſigh'd, the impulſe was momentary, and immediately check'd. To Adela's addreſs, reſpecting her huſband quitting the cottage ſo ſoon, Ella oppoſed not the ſelfiſh wiſh, or the puſillanimous dread; taking the venerable matron's hand, with a ſmile that ſpoke to the heart, ſhe cried,

" Ah, my mother, you are dejected—is not Lambert protected by the Deity we are taught to adore?"

Adela ſtood corrected, looked at the lovely comforter, and ſaw, in her fine countenance, that meek expreſſion of reſignation, which nothing can pourtray, but a conſcious dependance, on the great diſpenſer of our various trials. Again the tear filled Adela's eye—again a mental ejaculation paſſed her lips, as ſhe turned from the tender object of a thouſand cares and fears, to an employment ſuited to her age and neceſſities; while Ella, quitting the cot, rambled among the woods,

or

or trip'd along the heathy waſte, and in the enjoyment of wholeſome exerciſe, deepened, on her countenance, the bloom of youth and health.

CHAP. II.

Of high determin'd ſpirit roughly brave;
By ancient learning to th'enlightened love
Of ancient freedom warm'd. ——

THOMPSON.

ADELA continued at her wheel, 'till noon reminded her of preparing their little repaſt; this was ſoon compleated, when looking towards the heath, ſhe perceived Ella flying along the narrow path which wound among

among the furze, and in a moment was at the little dwelling; when, unable to ſpeak from haſte, ſhe could only point to the eaſtern hill, from which deſcended two men, evidently diſguiſed. She remembered the horrors of that night, which ſhe had almoſt miraculouſly eſcaped, and the conſequent caution given to Lambert by her preſerver; and ſeeing thoſe ſtrangers advancing towards her, imagined this to be another ſhocking criſis in her fate. The matron entertained no ſuch notion, but quickly proved to Ella, that by their bewildered manner, and faint reluctant ſteps, they had loſt their way. Happy to render a good office to her fellow mortals, ſhe waited, with her trembling companion hanging on her arm, 'till they came nearer; while Ella bluſhed at that want of fortitude, which might lead her to a diſcloſure of ſecrets, ſhe could not bear to touch upon.

Adela could now plainly hear the elder of the two, as he ſunk upon the ſtump of a tree which

which lay near the houſe, faintly declare he could go no further.

"Step," he cried, "to that cottage, perchance ſome charitable ſoul will indulge me with a draught of water, and a morſel of bread."

"Courage, ſir," replied the other, while he endeavoured to raiſe him, "we ſhall ſoon be beyond the reach of purſuit; the hills that ſeem to cloſe behind this hut, are the boundaries of our danger; could we but paſs them, I think you will be ſafe."

"Yes, but ſick with hunger, fatigue, and above all, internal reproach." They were ſilent.

It was the ſting of guilt, touch'd by conſcience's unerring hand; it vibrated upon the heart of age; a cold chill ran through Ella's veins; ſhe felt, as if about to witneſs ſome extraordinary occurrence, and drew ſtill cloſer

cloſer to Adela, who cautiouſly advancing a few ſteps, liſtened attentively, but could hear no more: ſhe reflected a moment; *ſhe* was neither faint or ſick—guilt ſhe knew not: looking back, ſhe beheld the frugal board prepared againſt her huſband's return; there was an air of cheerfulneſs and comparative plenty in the appearance of things; brown bread, cheeſe, cold meat, with a jug of beer, all placed upon a clean coarſe cloth. Really, thought the good-natured Adela, here is more than we can eat. The tranſition from her own preſent comforts, to the ſtarving travellers neceſſities, were rapid—even poignant.

"I have but little to ſpare, yet," ſaid ſhe ſoftly to Ella, "we can remove their hunger; be not afraid, my love, but indeed theſe men muſt be relieved: Lambert would ſcarcely forgive us, if we let ſo fair an opportunity ſlip, of helping our poor brethren."

So ſaying, ſhe went towards the ſtrangers, whoſe faces were then turned from her. They

They ſtarted, looked confuſed; but her countenance, requeſt, deportment, ſo frank, ſo plain, ſo kind, all contributed to remove their apprehenſions. The feeble ſtranger bowed in thankful acknowledgment, and aſſiſted by the other, who was apparently much younger, entered the cottage; while Ella ſhrunk from people, whom, notwithſtanding appearances, ſhe conſidered in a formidable light, and immediately withdrew; while the matron, with the frankeſt hoſpitality, invited her viſitors to eat.

"Spare not, my friends," ſhe cried, "had our cruel countrymen and foreign enemies permitted, I could have entertained you better—but indeed the King, God forgive us—"

"What of the King," interrupted the old man, with a ſtern aſpect.

"Why," heſitated Adela, "he ought—Come, ſirs, drink, it will refreſh you, if it does not ſtrengthen."

"But

"But the King—you do not tell us what he ought."

"Nay, for that matter," anſwered ſhe, a little diſturbed, "I only think he ſhould have protected his poor ſubjects, and not have left us to the mercy of thoſe he has provoked—no, nor ſuffered his wicked miniſters to devour our little comforts."

The wretched old man wiped a tear from his eye; "the King and his miniſters are abuſed," ſaid he, "alas, my poor deſerted Sovereign, who knows if"—then dropping the bread ſhe had cut, he claſp'd his hands in bitter anguiſh. "Dear injured Edward, where, where have thy foes impriſoned thee;" but partly recollecting himſelf; "are *you*, even at the extremity of England, are *you* a ſufferer by this horrible confuſion."

"Take, deareſt ſir," ſaid his youthful companion, "take ſome refreſhment, it will renew

renew your waſted ſtrength and ſpirits; you will then ſee things in a different view."

"But what, my poor ruined Raymond, what ſhall reſtore."

Fearful of the conſequences of unguarded grief, his friend begged him not to think of paſt events, for that the inconveniences they had endured, would give that homely feaſt a zeſt and ſweetneſs, the moſt luxurious board could not ſupply.

Adela ſaw ſomething much amiſs, but ignorant of the motives that induced ſo much agitation, contented herſelf with renewing her entreaties and apologies; when a ſudden noiſe without alarmed her gueſts.

"'Tis only Lambert, my friends," and without ſtopping to ſay who Lambert was, haſtened out to inform him what ſhe had done; with a hearty frankneſs, he commend-

ed

ed her zeal, and lamented, in feeling terms, his inability to procure them better fare.

" Do not fear a helpleſs creature like me," he cried, for Adela had told him, in a few words, before he entered, of their apparent dread of a purſuit; " be aſſured, my friends, you are ſafe from any danger ariſing from us; it is too true, that thoſe who ſhould have ſecured to us peace and ſafety, deprive us almoſt of the neceſſaries of life, ſince they have not ſpared my flocks, my cattle, the corn I had painfully gotten together, nor even the fuel I had provided againſt a northern winter—but yet Omnipotence, praiſed be his mercies, has not forſaken his poor ſervants—we have yet a little, and half that little is at your ſervice." He then ſat down, and fervently implored a bleſſing upon the ſimple viands.

The ſtrangers gazed at a phenomenon, ſo unuſual among the careleſs part of mankind, and could ſcarcely profit by his generous invitation,

invitation, ſo much were they ſtruck with the piety that dictated ſuch pure gratitude, ſuch unaffected benevolence.

Somewhat encouraged by Lambert's preſence, Ella now ventured to deſcend from her little chamber, and place herſelf at the table, and by ſo doing, furniſhed them with freſh cauſe for wonder and admiration. The ſimplicity of her pale brown ſtuff jacket, and cloſe cap, by no means agreed with the beauty of her perſon, and a certain dignity which, while it adorned her manners, corrected the timidity and caution of her character. The elder viſitant gazed at her with a perplexing attention, and demanded, with an alarming eagerneſs, that alſo lately affected his voice, "if that fair damſel was related to Lambert."

Lambert trembled—Ella coloured deeply; the ſecret which moſt probably connected itſelf with her ſafety, perhaps her life, might hang on the point of elucidation; alas, ſhe thought,

thought, that I had but explained my ſituation to Lambert; he might then have warded this blow from a helpleſs creature; while the ſuggeſtion of terror paſſed through her mind, her venerable friend was ſilently condemning his own temerity, and Adela's ill-timed charity, which had thus expoſed the innocent girl to ſuſpicious inquiries; however, the anſwer he was endeavouring to frame, met with a ſtrange interruption; his wife, who had finiſhed her light meal, left the room merely to diſpoſe of the wood her huſband had brought home, but haſtily entering, ſhe caſt an affrighted look at the ſtrange men, and whiſpered to Lambert, who, without ſpeaking, followed her to the door: he ſoon re-entered, and with a countenance, partaking of Adela's terror, ſtood a moment in ſuſpenſe. The richneſs of their dreſs, which occaſionally diſcovered itſelf beneath a pilgrim's habit, and the pommel of a broad ſword that glittered through Raymond's diſguiſe, convinced Lambert ſome dangerous myſtery urged their concealment; and a ſenſe

of the miſchief he had already endured, kindled doubt in a boſom, naturally void of miſtruſt. Conſcious that ſomewhat had occurred to juſtify this ſudden tranſition from the moſt engaging confidence, to cold conſtraint and awkward confuſion, his gueſts aroſe, bowed their thanks to the good couple, and offered to depart. Lambert, inſtinctively, as it were, caught the old man's arm—a moment's conſideration painted them to his mind, either as treacherous in their intentions, or ſubject to the dread of a purſuing enemy; and what, thought he, have *I* to fear, with neither riches to tempt, or power to be of conſequence to any party—ſurely *I* am ſafe, and ſhould they, indeed, be in want of an aſylum—he could argue no longer, but addreſſing them as they ſtood, ſuſpended between a wiſh to go, and a deſire to know the cauſe of an alteration ſo viſible;

"Whither, my friends," he cried, "do you bend your ſteps; it ſhould ſeem you dread the enemies of our unhappy country; or

or do you, in this diſguiſe, ſeek to deceive the harmleſs and the ignorant."

"What means our kind hoſt," interrupted the ancient wanderer, "we are too miſerable to be miſtaken for the abettors of ſucceſsful villany; born to the enjoyment of ſplendid poſſeſſions, I have now lived to ſee them torn from me by rebels, who aim in my deſtruction, to carry ſorrow to the heart of the beſt of Kings."

"I believe you, ſir, but ſay, are you apprehenſive of a purſuit."

"Too ſurely, Lambert."

"Then you are loſt—upon the heath, croſs which you came, a party of ſoldiers are ſtraggling, though at a conſiderable diſtance; Adela diſcovered them by the glitter of their arms."

" Then art thou undone," exclaimed the old man—wretched Deſpenſer, thou art loſt indeed; fly, deareſt Raymond, thou may'ſt eſcape, but theſe white hairs will but excite their fury—this furrowed countenance be a theme for ridicule; I cannot ſhun them—age and infirmity make a coward of me, and the danger I ſcorned, the death I defied in life's full vigour, now, ſuch is human nature, now is the object of predominant terror."

" My father," cried Raymond, " recover yourſelf; can it be, are you the intrepid, yet cautious miniſter, whoſe boſom was the receptacle of a monarch's ſecrets; this diſtreſs is unmanly, and tarniſhes ——"

" No more, Raymond; view that face," turning to Ella, who ſtood transfixed with ſurpriſe and horror; " that face indeed unmans me; it reminds me of a deed of darkneſs" then wringing his hands; " O God, O infatuated prince, deep has thy kindneſs plunged the favourite of a day;" a tear which moiſtened

moiſtened the venerable cheek, gave force to this apoſtrophe, and pity ſprung unconſciouſly in Lambert's boſom.

The names of Deſpencer, and favourite, made him ſhudder, for it was partly owing to Edward's blameable paſſion for foreigners, that England became ſo ſhockingly involved; but a favourite under misfortune, lamenting the diſgrace he had deſervedly incurred, without the conſolation of deriving a claim to protection from his moderation while in power, was an object which, however gratifying it might be to thoſe who encouraged a ſpirit of reſentment, only preſented ſtrong motives for the exerciſe of compaſſion in a boſom void of vindictiveneſs; applying therefore to Raymond, he pointed out the neceſſity of climbing the mountains of Stanmore, which aroſe immediately behind his houſe, offering himſelf for their conductor.

"Yes, my friend," anſwered Raymond, "to this noble Lord, ſuch an aſylum muſt

be acceptable—but for myſelf ——" and his eye blazed with a ſullen indignation, "'tis needleſs; a few foes may conquor a feeble body, rendered ſuch by my late faſting and fatigue—but let them; I only bluſh to think I have, for one inſtant, betrayed a weakneſs, excuſable, and hardly ſo, even in age."

"You cannot, my ſon, ſurely you cannot think of oppoſing our enemies, without a poſſibility of deliverance; let us endeavour to reach St. Andrew's."

"Ceaſe, my Lord," cried the impetuous Raymond, "ceaſe to perſuade to an act, unworthy the principles you have inculcated; I fled to guard and lead *you* to a place of ſafety—this good man will complete my wiſhes, and ſecure you from further danger; but Raymond de Valenciennes will die as he has lived," and he drew his ſword, ſhaking off, at the ſame inſtant, the Pilgrim's habit."

"Forbear,"

" Forbear," exclaimed the terrified Deſpencer, " you *may die*, but who will revenge your death—are not all, whom I have cheriſhed, obnoxious to the whole nation; and will not the vile Mortimer build a permanent eſtabliſhment upon our ruin."

" Mortimer," returned the indignant De Valenciennes, " periſh the name and race of Edward's conqueror; O that I were oppoſed to that reptile, and maſter of this good ſword;" and he brandiſhed his weapon with a violence, that made the helpleſs females tremble.

" And do you wiſh to cruſh that minion of our faithleſs Queen—then live—live to meet *him* on equal terms, who aims at nothing leſs than our royal maſter's life; his honour, that better part, is already ſullied by her, who ſhould have cheriſh'd that ſacred ſpark."—After a moment's pauſe;

" Well, then," he exclaimed, " I conſent—come, Lambert, conduct us over the

mountains—ſave, at leaſt, this decaying ſtem of an injured family; age may have frozen the current of fortitude in *his* boſom, but in mine it flows with increaſing vigour, and I hope to prove my loyalty in the attempt, if not the execution of a project, which faith to my prince, quickened by my obligation to this dear tender father ſuggeſts."

"My Lords," interrupted Lambert, "time wears—you have none to loſe—let us depart. There is a winding path along yon hill, ſo much obſcured by low thickets, as to cover your retreat, if you can gain it unperceived. The naked appearance of the country extends no further than what the eye can, from hence, command." He then, followed by his gueſts, went to the back of his cottage, and after reconnoitring the ſurrounding heights, looked towards the waſte, and plainly perceived the ſoldiers were refreſhing themſelves in ſtraggling parties, on the ground. With much caution, and infinite trouble, they crept along, ſo as to elude their obſervation,

obſervation, 'till they gained the winding path, which was to conduct them from their ſuppoſed purſuers. Here Deſpencer ſtop'd, and a friendly conteſt enſued, as he inſiſted Lambert ſhould return to his family, as they might be rendered unhappy by his abſence. This, the good creature was the more ready to comply with, as not only Adela, but Ella, had beheld his departure with tears. Then, after pointing to the track they were to follow, he earneſtly commended them to the care of heaven, though his religious and political principles were rather at variance reſpecting Deſpencer, who had even confeſſed himſelf deteſted by the whole nation."

CHAP. III.

Her kindly melting heart
To every want and every woe;
To guilt itſelf when in diſtreſs
The balm of pity would impart.

AKENSIDE.

LAMBERT had ſcarcely reached home, when he found himſelf encompaſſed by the troops, whoſe appearance had cauſed the removal of his viſitors. With a ferocious air they interrogated him reſpecting forage for their horſes; but he meekly aſſured them, he had been plundered of every thing that could be of uſe to them. It was with much diſcontent

diſcontent they heard him out; but the deſolate appearance of Lambert's ruined farm, carried ſtronger conviction than any thing he could ſay, and they left him, not without execrating thoſe who had been before hand with them in robbery and violence.

Happy to be rid of ſuch unwelcome intruders, the old man rejoined his family, with whom he commented on theſe extraordinary occurrences; indeed, it was an undecided point with him, whether the men were Deſpencer's purſuers, or guards ſent into that country, to prevent the incurſions of the Scots, who generally took advantage of England's internal diviſions to harraſs the frontiers, and by ſo doing, brought much miſchief on the inhabitants of Northumberland; though when he perceived them ranging along the ſide of the hill Deſpencer had juſt quitted, he inclined to the former opinion, and the more, as Ella obſerved to him, that during his abſence, they ſeemed particularly employed in ſearching the woods to the left,

adding her fervent wiſhes that they might eſcape.

"You do not conſider, they are, perhaps, our greateſt enemies," anſwered Lambert.

"And yet you relieved them."

"True, Ella, but they were in diſtreſs."

"Why, then, humanity was at war with prudence."

"Yes, and gained the victory; yet when I reflect upon Hugh Deſpencer's deſpotic behaviour, which primarily involved our nation, reaſon, as well as prudence, denies the claim humanity might juſtify. It is no wonder, Ella, that a man ſo fierce, ambitious, and unfeeling as he was, while in power, ſhould incur univerſal obloquy: to *him*, and his eldeſt ſon, is owing; to his ſelfiſh principles are we indebted, for our melancholy proſpect, and Mortimer's rebellion."

"Mortimer;

" Mortimer; did you not once tell us, he pretended to avenge our injuries."

" Yes, Ella, as the ſavage Hyena contends with the tyger for the lamb that lies by them: indeed," added he, ſighing, " I truly imagined, when my dear maſter, of glorious memory, reſigned his crown to a ſon, whoſe conduct before his acceſſion, had proved a ſource of uneaſineſs to his royal parent, that England would mourn in bitter anguiſh a loſs, which the meaneſt ſubject has keenly felt, and ſaw, with much uneaſineſs, the aſcendancy the houſe of Deſpencer gained over our deluded monarch, who ſoon preferred that nobleman to thoſe envied honours which had already coſt the atrocious Gaveſton his life; but contented with my Adela's ſociety, I experienced no regret in quitting ſcenes, which my altered ſtation, and independant mind, rendered truly painful, and remained quietly ignorant of thoſe tumults, (at leaſt ſo far as reſpected our little property) which in different parts of the kingdom diſplay ſuch various

various horrors: but alas! what has my knowledge of the more active part of theſe troubles coſt me? civil war is the worſt of all terrors; it bids defiance to every royal, every ſocial, every domeſtic claim—horrible monſter, that feeds upon its parents vitals—upon the vitals of peace, brotherly love, humanity itſelf—that beholds a nation ſinking under the wound ſhe has inflicted; before whoſe ſanguinary ſteps fly every lovely connexion that binds the human race: tramples upon every law, political and divine; mercy, tenderneſs, juſtice, all ſhun the ruinous ſpoiler. Adela, have *we* not ſeen already the bold ſpirited youth, the gentle maid, the aged father and mother, mourning over the deſtruction of their honeſt hopes? how ſhall the baſe oppreſſors of their injured fellow ſubjects, anſwer to an offended Deity, whoſe characteriſtic is pure benevolence, founded on ſtrict juſtice, for their daring violation of every commanded duty?"

"Softly,

" Softly, dear Lambert, you are too warm."

" True, Adela, I *am* warm, but a retroſpect of the evils we have ſuffered, as individuals, and more heavily as a people, will juſtify a ſentiment of indignation."

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mountains—ſave, at leaſt, this decaying ſtem of an injured family; age may have frozen the current of fortitude in *his* boſom, but in mine it flows with increaſing vigour, and I hope to prove my loyalty in the attempt, if not the execution of a project, which faith to my prince, quickened by my obligation to this dear tender father ſuggeſts."

"My Lords," interrupted Lambert, "time wears—you have none to loſe—let us depart. There is a winding path along yon hill, ſo much obſcured by low thickets, as to cover your retreat, if you can gain it unperceived. The naked appearance of the country extends no further than what the eye can, from hence, command." He then, followed by his gueſts, went to the back of his cottage, and after reconnoitring the ſurrounding heights, looked towards the waſte, and plainly perceived the ſoldiers were refreſhing themſelves in ſtraggling parties, on the ground. With much caution, and infinite trouble, they crept along, ſo as to elude their obſervation,

obſervation, 'till they gained the winding path, which was to conduct them from their ſuppoſed purſuers. Here Deſpencer ſtop'd, and a friendly conteſt enſued, as he inſiſted Lambert ſhould return to his family, as they might be rendered unhappy by his abſence. This, the good creature was the more ready to comply with, as not only Adela, but Ella, had beheld his departure with tears. Then, after pointing to the track they were to follow, he earneſtly commended them to the care of heaven, though his religious and political principles were rather at variance reſpecting Deſpencer, who had even confeſſed himſelf deteſted by the whole nation."

CHAP. III.

Her kindly melting heart
To every want and every woe;
To guilt itſelf when in diſtreſs
The balm of pity would impart.

AKENSIDE.

LAMBERT had ſcarcely reached home, when he found himſelf encompaſſed by the troops, whoſe appearance had cauſed the removal of his viſitors. With a ferocious air they interrogated him reſpecting forage for their horſes; but he meekly aſſured them, he had been plundered of every thing that could be of uſe to them. It was with much diſcontent

diſcontent they heard him out; but the deſolate appearance of Lambert's ruined farm, carried ſtronger conviction than any thing he could ſay, and they left him, not without execrating thoſe who had been before hand with them in robbery and violence.

Happy to be rid of ſuch unwelcome intruders, the old man rejoined his family, with whom he commented on theſe extraordinary occurrences; indeed, it was an undecided point with him, whether the men were Deſpencer's purſuers, or guards ſent into that country, to prevent the incurſions of the Scots, who generally took advantage of England's internal diviſions to harraſs the frontiers, and by ſo doing, brought much miſchief on the inhabitants of Northumberland; though when he perceived them ranging along the ſide of the hill Deſpencer had juſt quitted, he inclined to the former opinion, and the more, as Ella obſerved to him, that during his abſence, they ſeemed particularly employed in ſearching the woods to the left,

adding her fervent wiſhes that they might eſcape.

"You do not conſider, they are, perhaps, our greateſt enemies," anſwered Lambert.

"And yet you relieved them."

"True, Ella, but they were in diſtreſs."

"Why, then, humanity was at war with prudence."

"Yes, and gained the victory; yet when I reflect upon Hugh Deſpencer's deſpotic behaviour, which primarily involved our nation, reaſon, as well as prudence, denies the claim humanity might juſtify. It is no wonder, Ella, that a man ſo fierce, ambitious, and unfeeling as he was, while in power, ſhould incur univerſal obloquy: to *him*, and his eldeſt ſon, is owing; to his ſelfiſh principles are we indebted, for our melancholy proſpect, and Mortimer's rebellion."

"Mortimer;

" Mortimer; did you not once tell us, he pretended to avenge our injuries."

" Yes, Ella, as the ſavage Hyena contends with the tyger for the lamb that lies by them: indeed," added he, ſighing, " I truly imagined, when my dear maſter, of glorious memory, reſigned his crown to a ſon, whoſe conduct before his acceſſion, had proved a ſource of uneaſineſs to his royal parent, that England would mourn in bitter anguiſh a loſs, which the meaneſt ſubject has keenly felt, and ſaw, with much uneaſineſs, the aſcendancy the houſe of Deſpencer gained over our deluded monarch, who ſoon preferred that nobleman to thoſe envied honours which had already coſt the atrocious Gaveſton his life; but contented with my Adela's ſociety, I experienced no regret in quitting ſcenes, which my altered ſtation, and independant mind, rendered truly painful, and remained quietly ignorant of thoſe tumults, (at leaſt ſo far as reſpected our little property) which in different parts of the kingdom diſplay ſuch various

various horrors: but alas! what has my knowledge of the more active part of theſe troubles coſt me? civil war is the worſt of all terrors; it bids defiance to every royal, every ſocial, every domeſtic claim—horrible monſter, that feeds upon its parents vitals—upon the vitals of peace, brotherly love, humanity itſelf—that beholds a nation ſinking under the wound ſhe has inflicted; before whoſe ſanguinary ſteps fly every lovely connexion that binds the human race: tramples upon every law, political and divine; mercy, tenderneſs, juſtice, all ſhun the ruinous ſpoiler. Adela, have *we* not ſeen already the bold ſpirited youth, the gentle maid, the aged father and mother, mourning over the deſtruction of their honeſt hopes? how ſhall the baſe oppreſſors of their injured fellow ſubjects, anſwer to an offended Deity, whoſe characteriſtic is pure benevolence, founded on ſtrict juſtice, for their daring violation of every commanded duty?"

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tion of the events which had baniſhed her from her natural friends, but poſitively determined Ella to confide her grief to the venerable Lambert, whoſe goodneſs and diſcretion, ſhe thought, might abſolve a breach of promiſe, and truſt to his wiſdom and inſtructions for the guidance of her future conduct.

Thus reſolved, ſhe aroſe at break of day, and defying a cold ſleet, which, ſoon after ſhe left the houſe, fell in abundance, and the terrors of a diſcovery, (though but the day before ſhe dreaded the ſight of ſtrangers) walked into the woods; but driven from thence by the exceſſive damp, followed the courſe of a path, which wound towards the back of the houſe; when the weather, in ſome degree clearing up, induced her to extend her ramble.

When Adela met her huſband at breakfaſt, ſhe obſerved to him, "that Ella wept as ſhe paſſed the foot of their bed: it was ſtrange what

what cauſe could *ſhe* have for affliction *then*, any more than before."

Lambert thought otherwiſe; he had noticed Deſpencer's ſurpriſe—his exclamation, and a ſomething like guilt, that ſeemed to paſs over his aged countenance; it therefore was no ways wonderful, that Ella ſhould be affected; it could only be then her dread of meeting an enemy in the old man, that had ſhocked her ſpirits, which, though the danger was removed by his abſence, had not recovered their uſual placid tone.

Thus reaſoned Lambert, erroneouſly drawing concluſions, that could only be juſtified by the ſimplicity of his own honeſt ideas. The clouds again proving too powerful for the wind, which had partially diſperſed them, and a heavy ſhower enſuing, Lambert, uneaſy for his beloved Ella, ſet out to meet her, with Adela's warmeſt cloak, to ſhelter her from the violent rain. He had been gone about half an hour, when Ella returned, driven from her

her favourite walk by the ſtorm, and inly determined to make the intended communication to her kind protectors; but unluckily miſſing the good man, ſhe paſſed ſome hours with Adela, vexed and diſappointed; nor heeded her own comfortleſs and wet ſituation, while her benevolent heart throb'd for Lambert. Adela, while rouſing the fire to dry poor Ella's garments, could not, though contrary to her uſual gentleneſs, avoid a number of gueſſes, doubts and fears; hinting at the unfortunate girl, as the primary cauſe of Lambert's leaving the houſe, on ſuch an inauſpicious morning.

Ella ſigh'd; ſhe had never before been chidden: ſhe ſigh'd, ſob'd, and burſt into tears; Adela took her hand;

"Pardon me, my ſweet Ella, I am to blame; but Lambert, our only earthly hope and defence."

"He

" He comes," cried the tranſported maid " dear, dear Lambert, what has detained you; why did you ſtay ſo long? how cold you are."

She then joyfully ran for a change of garments, while Adela producing the remnants of yeſterday's repaſt, and placing more billets on the fire, diſcovered ſo much pleaſure and alacrity in arranging her little comforts, as to delight the venerable man. He then informed them, " that poſitive of the path Ella had taken, he followed it 'till it brought him to a path of the wood ſo thickly planted, as to convince him ſhe could have gone no farther that way; and while he was conſidering whether to return, or wait a little upon the ſpot, he perceived the path wind ſomewhat to the left, and though overgrown with brambles, thought he would purſue it a little way; for though ſome years reſident upon his farm, and well acquainted with the cleared grounds about it, he had never before penetrated ſo far into theſe receſſes. His walk

was

was of ſhort duration, and terminated in a low door, let into a flint wall, of amazing ſtrength and thickneſs, to which the vaſt ſolid buttreſſes, made no inconſiderable addition. Stepping upon the ſtump of an old oak, he could obſerve, on the other ſide, at ſome diſtance, the battlements and upper ſtory of an abbey or caſtle. He had ſtood only a minute, when, through the bars of a grated window, he ſaw the face of a man, whoſe countenance disfaced by a tangled, uncut beard, was, as well as his feeble ſight could diſcern, ghaſtly in the extreme. By waving his hat, Lambert attempted to diſcover himſelf, but in vain; the wretched creature ſoon left the window, and immediately after, ſeveral indiſtinct, yet piercing groans, entirely overcame poor Lambert's courage, and he owned he felt ſymptoms of fear, ſuch as had never diſgraced him, even in the hotteſt battle.

"I think," ſaid Adela, as ſhe was unconſciouſly drawing the bolt which faſtened their door, you was wrong in venturing ſo far,

far, in ſuch a diſagreeable day too; beſides, it was running great hazards; and really, *we* ought not to be ſo careleſs; though we have nothing to loſe, there is no reaſon we ſhould expoſe ourſelves to any more dangers."

The ſolemn ſtillneſs creeping upon the face of nature, after the late roaring wind and driving rain, ſeemed to ſtrike Adela with unuſual awe, as ſhe peep'd into the foggy gloom, which envelop'd the ſurrounding country, but quickly letting fall the wooden latch, and carefully cloſing the bolt, (faſtenings which, 'till the late inteſtine commotions, ſuch humble abodes had not needed) ſhe turned to the table, and began to trim a lamp, for the purpoſe of lighting them to bed; when ſuddenly looking towards the caſement, that ſhook with a ſudden violence, and then at Lambert;

"What noiſe is that?" ſhe cried, with a tremulous voice; "O Lambert, do you not hear them? the ſoldiers are returned; or

perhaps they may be ruffians, who have dodg'd my huſband from the old Abbey: alas, my dear Ella, ſhall we be always ſubject to theſe cruel alarms."

Pale, and almoſt fainting, Ella could make no anſwer, but caught Lambert's arm, as Adela did his other hand. They liſtened—all was quiet—ſcarcely daring to breathe, they caſt the moſt apprehenſive look at the window; it was but a momentary, though dreadful ſilence.—The latch rattled furiouſly, and after two or three attempts, the door burſt open.—Thoſe fears which had riſen to a height, ſufficient to give the moſt common appearance a form of horror, were conſiderably increaſed, when they beheld a martial figure, his armour ſtained with blood, and hack'd in ſeveral places: all this Lambert could perceive; but the dim lamp, and his own agitation, prevented him from knowing a face, pale with deſpair. He ſtood a moment, looking round with a ſavage wildneſs,

and

and then lifting up his hands, between which he graſped a ſword, deprived of half its blade.

" I have loſt him," he exclaimed, " O wretched that I am; I have loſt him; he is gone, Lambert; this ſword, like an able, though cowardly auxiliary, has failed in the hour of danger."

Adela uttered a cry expreſſive of concern and joy—Ella ſlowly retired from the protecting arm; her apprehenſions were in part relieved. It was Raymond De Vallenciennes returned without his aged friend; but terrified at his ſhocking appearance and furious expreſſions, ſhe ſhrunk behind Lambert, waiting, with almoſt breathleſs anxiety, the explanation of his dark and terrible hints, while the diſtraction which ſeemed to poſſeſs him, appall'd her ſoul.

Adela now found courage to offer him a chair, into which he flung himſelf, and ſat

for ſeveral minutes gloomily meditating, when haſtily riſing:

"No, Lambert," he cried, "I could not ſave him; ſee, Lambert, Raymond De Vallenciennes weeps: who, 'till now, ever beheld the veſtige of human weakneſs dim theſe eyes? O that every drop ſuch barbarity extracts from my burning brain, would turn to ſparks of fire to conſume Deſpencer's enemies."

The broken ſword which lay upon the floor now caught his notice.

"Deteſted weapon, had but the fury of my ſoul animated thy feeble blade, Deſpenſer had been ſafe," and then riſing with the action of a maniac, he hurled it through the window.

Adela and Ella ſtood motionleſs; the marks of anger which eſcaped Raymond's eye, now ſlowly rolled over his impaſſioned cheek;

cheek; he daſh'd it off with a clenched hand, and then looking with an eager aſpect at his pitying hoſt,

"Don't judge me wrongfully, friend, Raymond is no coward; deep in the heart of many gallant fellows, that ſword was drench'd, 'till wrenching it from the body of one, who had aim'd a ſtroke at my Lord, it broke, and another wretch murdered him almoſt unoppoſed."

He ſtop'd, and ſullenly replacing himſelf, would not accept any refreſhment, but ſat in ſilent grief the reſt of the night, while Lambert, forgetting the weighty reaſons he had to rejoice, in the diſgrace of a houſe ſo obnoxious to England, reſpectfully attended his gueſt, nor offered to repeat his hoſpitable entreaties, which he obſerved, rather irritated than conciliated his impatient diſpoſition.

CHAP. IV.

Some ſteer aright—but the black blaſt blows hard
And puffs them wide of hope———

YOUNG.

NO ſooner did the faint gleam of morning break upon Adela's window, than ſhe aroſe, with Ella, both of whom, at Lambert's deſire, had left him about midnight, with his unhappy viſitor; and while Adela, engaged in domeſtic duties, attempted to ſtifle the anxiety of her mind, which had kept her in a ſtate of melancholy watchfulneſs: Ella, ſtill more reſtleſs and dejected, wiſhing, yet afraid

to

to go down, obſerved, at the opened caſement, the gradual, though tardy approach of day; no yellow lines of light illumined the obſcure horrizon, or preceded the riſing ſun; a heavy gloom hung over the woods to the left, which, agitated by a gentle breeſe, ſhook off the foggy moiſture, while the dreary waſte opening before the cottage, was involved in the humid vapour. Correſponding to the ſtate of her mind was this deſolate appearance; and though Ella was certainly no poet, it brought to remembrance a few lines ſhe had formerly compoſed, in ſome ſimilar ſituation, which, in a ſtile, ſimple as her invention, and accents ſweet, though low, ſhe murmured to herſelf, and which was expreſſive of

HOPE AND DESPAIR.

Deceiv'd by hope, whoſe brilliant beams,
Give fancy's tints her hue;
Pleas'd we indulge her air-form'd dreams,
And fondly think them true.

But ſoon deſpair's ſad ſick'ning ſigh,
With fatal mildew fades;
The tranſient bloom—its colours fly,
Involv'd in ſorrow's ſhades.

The melancholy ſubject ſhe had choſen, communicated its energy to her voice, which modulated in general to the plaintiveneſs of ſorrow, caught additional tenderneſs from the painful ideas ſhe had recently imbibed; nor could the cheerfulneſs of an innocent ſpirit ever totally deſtroy that feeling expreſſion which ſpoke ſo inſinuatingly to the ſenſible heart. Her little ſong ended, ſhe continued involved in painful meditation, 'till the ſolemnity and lovelineſs of the ſcene before her, induced a calmneſs, not totally unpleaſing to one of Ella's turn: ſhe would have indulged it in her uſual morning walk, but conſidering that her only way to the door, muſt be through the room which contained the intereſting ſtranger, ſhe remained penſive and ſilent, 'till Adela's preſence ſhould countenance her appearance below.

Careful as ſhe was to confine her ſweet tones, they reached De Vallenciennes; raiſing himſelf, he walked to the window; her charming notes ſtruck upon his ſoul—he ſighed,

ſighed, and turning with quickneſs to Lambert, demanded from whence they came.

"From my daughter," heſitated the old man.

Again Raymond ſighed—again he liſtened—but the voice had ceaſed.

"Moſt wonderful," he cried, "your daughter, ſaid you; ah Lambert," and ſhook his head. He then took two or three turns, when ſuddenly looking at his diſtained armour, he ſeemed, for the firſt time, to recollect the diſordered, as well as dangerous figure he muſt make. Caſting a dejected and apologizing eye upon his venerable friend, with a more compoſed accent, though not totally diveſted of a haughtineſs, at all times but too diſcernable, he hoped Lambert would allow for the effects of a misfortune, which had nearly deprived him of every reaſoning faculty.

Happy to find his furious paſſions ſomewhat aſſuaged, the good man ventured to ſuggeſt the neceſſity of changing his apparrel, and bathing himſelf, at leaſt to cover his armour with a looſe coarſe coat. Readily accepting the offer, he once more diſguiſed his noble figure, inwardly lamenting the melancholy ſituation that induced ſuch a change.

Breakfaſt being ready, Lambert ſecretly wiſhed Ella might not appear; but Adela, in the honeſt ſimplicity of her heart, proudly introduced the reluctant girl, on whom De Vallenciennes gazed with tenderneſs, curioſity, and the profoundeſt reſpect. After an awkward ſilence, preſerved for ſome minutes, Raymond, who was conſcious that he owed to his hoſpitable entertainers ſome account of himſelf, began to ſpeak of thoſe events which had driven him from a powerleſs monarch, and precipitated his ancient friend from the height of grandeur, to irreparable ruin.

" I need

"I need not," ſaid he, "enlarge upon the animoſity ſubſiſting between our royal maſter, and his infamous conſort; the conſequences have proved fatal to England, and the beſt of Kings; that ſpirit of loyalty and indignant ſhame which Iſabella's vile commerce with Mortimer had rouſed in the nation, added to the inexcuſable deſire of fomenting civil broils, that actuated a factious claſs, ſoon induced a public declaration of their different principles. For ſome weeks we ſtem'd the torrent of diſaffection, but—" here he glowed with proud confuſion, for ſome myſterious reaſon; "Indeed I can give none but Mortimer's jealouſy of Lord Deſpencer's attachment to his Sovereign."

He here told, it was a point too delicate for Raymond to explain, as it was ſharpened by a reflection upon Deſpencer's conduct, but haſtily reſuming his ſtory,

"Soon, Lambert, my noble friend's power was cruſh'd, and he was obliged to

ſhelter under kingly authority." Pride, at this humiliating confeſſion, burnt up the drop it had call'd into his blazing eye. " Iſabella, happy to attain the purpoſe for which ſhe had proſtituted character, conſcience, the ennobling feelings of a once pure heart, and the common claims of connubial affection, concentered every deteſtable motion of her corrupted ſoul, into the ſhallow pretence of maternal love; and rejoicing in Deſpencer's unmerited fall, and Mortimer's ſcandalous attachment, retired with him, and the youthful Edward, to France. In vain our deluded Monarch ſent meſſages to her (meſſages enforced with tears, and in the humbleſt terms of entreaty) to return; but glorying in her infamy, and contented with the ſociety of thoſe who conſulted not the true intereſt of England, ſhe poſitively refuſed, alledging, as her oſtenſible reaſon, danger to the young heir, whoſe life, ſhe wickedly affirmed, had been threatened by my noble protector's family; and this denial was conſidered by the royal partizans, as the moſt inſidious neglect.

To

To this cauſe, the houſe of Deſpencer owes its diſgrace. Too long lull'd in blind ſecurity, they careleſsly beheld the awful cloud which threatened the poor Monarch, nor once imagined it could reach a power ſo ſacred, 'till they felt its ſhade, and finally envelope his, and his miniſter's privileges, and ſaw, too late, that in Edward's deſtruction, Deſpencer's was involved. Who ſhall ſay that the noble qualities of the heart are merely local, confined to the higher order of men, when to a brilliant example of gratitude in a poor ſtable boy, Deſpencer owed his eſcape from London, at which place he arrived but the day before, on buſineſs of the utmoſt importance, from Briſtol; for the ſame hour that had been fixed for our impriſonment, was the laſt we paſſed in that metropolis.

I had been airing in the morning, merely to exerciſe a beautiful horſe, which had been preſented me by the Baron of Corf Caſtle, when an under groom haſtened to hold the ſpirited ſteed, while I alighted, at the ſame minute leaning towards me, whiſpered,"

" That his Lord was in danger—his foes had prevailed, and guards were every hour expected."

" I was confounded, and ruſhing into the palace, happily met Deſpencer in the outer hall. My faithful intelligencer followed, and I would have queſtioned him reſpecting the truth of this information, but looking into the ſtreet, I perceived a troop of men at ſome diſtance, apparently riding toward us."

" They are coming, my Lord," ſaid the poor fellow; my Lord of Bedford's ſewer over-heard the High Chancellor ſay, the orders were given that you ſhould this day be ſeized."

" The worthy creature then entreated us to go through a narrow paſſage, which led to the Thames, where a hired barge, which we found by our generous contriver, had waited ſome time to convey us down the river, and with pain took a haſty leave of the noble fel-

low

low who had hazarded his own ſafety to procure ours.

" The appearance of ſoldiers on the Kentiſh ſhore, inducing us to land on the oppoſite ſide, we concealed ourſelves among the reeds 'till night, and then ſilent and cautious, we croſſed into the northern road, ſeeking the moſt ſolitary and unfrequented paths. We ſoon gained the vaſt wild foreſt or chace, which commences ſome miles north of London, where, reſting a few moments, ſelf-love gave way to domeſtic affection, and my diſtreſſed companion began to lament the fate of his numerous family, who doubtleſs would fall a prey to the enraged populace. I could give him no comfort, my own feelings were terrible; a ſincere and aged *parent*, for ſuch, from earlieſt youth, I had been taught to conſider him; forced, at the advanced period of ſeventy-five, from the mild government, under which he had long flouriſhed, to tread the lonely wilds and pathleſs tracts of an uncultivated country: a King driven by the emiſſaries

emiſſaries of the horrid Mortimer, from the ſummit of regal power; for theſe I keenly ſuffered, and faint were the outlines of every conſideration ſelfiſhneſs might bring forward, while the canvaſs was charged with tints ſo dark. It was with infinite trouble, as well as danger, that we paſſed the guards who lined the roads and towns, to watch for ſuſpected and proſcribed perſons; but we were happy enough to eſcape ſuſpicion, though the weakneſs of my poor friend, added greatly to our other inconveniencies.

"And now, Lambert, reflect upon our ſituation; the perogatives of the crown are ſuſpended, if not totally annihilated, while thoſe founded on violence and ſuperiour ſtrength, are admitted.

"But," interrupted Lambert, "had Lord Deſpencer no friends in London?"

"None, Lambert, but the worthy creature who ſo aſſiduouſly exerted himſelf in favour

vour of his diſgraced maſter: a fallen favourite has few friends; the blazing comet, though poſſibly employed for the moſt renovating purpoſe, excites more terror than delight; and though a ſucceſsful miniſter may *command* a majority, he cannot conciliate the *love* of the people. The King himſelf preſerves not even the ſhadow of government; many applications were made to him to give up Deſpencer's family to a vindictive foe; but thoſe he could no longer protect, he ſcorned to betray, and his unhappy friend, though fully informed of Mortimer's treachery, falſely eſtimated his own ſecurity; nor, 'till rous'd by the faithful menial, ever ſuppoſed himſelf in danger: indeed, he might have expected what I have no doubt did really happen, a coalition between the adulterous Mortimer, and thoſe whoſe forfeited eſtates were given to him by a generous King; and if all theſe wanted reinforcement, a headſtrong populace was ready to give its violent ſuffrage."

He

He pauſed, ſighed, and then renewing the ſubject;

"My Lord has been highly blamed by thoſe, who raſhly ſuppoſe the miniſters, when truſted with power, muſt neceſſarily be bad men; and that the maintenance of ſtrict diſcipline throughout the realm, argues the intention to oppreſs and deſtroy; but had adminiſtration continued in its former channel, the labouring people had ſtill enjoyed their humble privileges."

Adela ſhook her head at this remark; ſhe was rather incredulous; nor did the ravage of their little farm tend to give her a more honourable opinion of this hazardous ſentiment: indeed, ſhe was ſorry to hear ſo great a man attempt to defend, what ſhe conſidered as inexcuſable, by endeavouring to remove the ſtigma from Deſpencer's character, which had been laid on it by thoſe who had felt the iron hand of deſpotic power.

Raymond

Raymond went on: "But wherefore dwell on themes like theſe, when one heart affecting ſorrow preſſes on my diſtracted memory."

"I would not," ſaid Lambert, "renew my Lord's grief, but if a recital of laſt night's—"

"Yes, my friend, that recital is due to your kindneſs; dear loſt Deſpencer: thou more than parent. Lambert, he was not my father, but—"

Pride, or ſome more laudable reaſon ſtop'd him; when a ſudden ſob from the innocent Ella, who aroſe to leave the room, unable to hide the tears his grief extorted, overcame, in a moment, the leading feature in his character, which ſunk to the gentleſt timidity, while, in the ſofteſt accents, he entreated her to ſtay, obſerving, that ſuch ſweet ſympathy was the ſureſt balm to wounds like his.

She

She ſat down again, trembling and pale, but endeavoured to compoſe her troubled ſpirits, while ſhe liſtened to a tale, no ways calculated to harmonize them.

" The diſtant view," reſumed De Valenciennes, " which we obtained of Scotland, from the hill to which Lambert conducted us, inſpired me with a hope of aſſiſtance; and I felt all my reluctance to aſk protection ſubſide, as we deſcended the northern declivity, and beheld a country that appeared to countenance the idea we had encouraged, of perfect ſafety.

The ſun was nearly ſetting when we reached the vale, and as there was neither houſe nor hut to be perceived, I began to fear for my poor friend, whoſe ſtrength had been ſo recently tried; but encouraged by the hope of ſecurity, he paſſed briſkly on, and as the night promiſed to be favourable, contented himſelf with the hope, that one more lodging in the open air, might prove as harmleſs as thoſe he had already endured; we

we had not gone far, when attracted by the appearance of ſome lofty firs, which grew ſo cloſe, as to elude even a heavy ſhower, we reſolved to ſtop under them, and ſpreading my pilgrim's habit upon the ground, I entreated Deſpencer to reſt his weary limbs; he conſented, and though unable to ſleep, we paſſed the dreary hours in tolerable comfort.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

——————————— So frequent death,
Sorrow he more than cauſes—he confounds.
YOUNG.

AT the firſt approach of day, we ſat forward; but had I known my treaſure was in ſuch danger, ſhould I have advanced? ſhould I not rather have once more ſought? but uſeleſs is retroſpection.

"Lambert, the ſun had now riſen with every ſign of a diſagreeable change; pale watry

watry clouds, their edges tinged with a faint red, obſcured his brightneſs, and we quickened our pace, and were ſoon incommoded by a miſty, cold rain, when emerging from a cloſe lane, we deſcried a conſiderable number of men trotting towards us: I already perceived they were ſoldiers, and gallantly mounted; we proceeded with cautious ſteps."

"Should they be inquiſitive," ſaid the Earl, "anſwer them with kindneſs."

"But they were rude, and queſtioned us when we reach'd them, with an inſulting ſuperiority; wonder not then, that I forgot the prudent charge juſt given me, or that I turned from them in ſilent indignation. The foremoſt horſeman nimbly alighting, roughly ſeized me; my ſword, in ſtruggling, made its way through the diſguiſe I wore."

"*Spies*," exclaimed the fellow, and immediately made a blow at me, while ſeveral more

more diſmounted to ſecure the unhappy Deſpencer: Lambert, he was ſtruck to the heart; quick as lightning I diſengaged myſelf from the ſoldier's fury, and ſtanding over my aged companion, defended a life ſo dear, at the hazard of my own. Surrounded by numbers, I yet remained unconquered, 'till purſuing my blows with careleſs eagerneſs, I loſt my footing, and my liberty: but what was that? did I not ſee the wretched Earl dragged from under me, by one whoſe appearance beſpoke high rank. Too ſecurely held to eſcape, I could only dart a look of vengeance at the furious chief; but that look was immediately charged with aſtoniſhment, ſurpriſe, and terror, when Deſpencer ſuddenly raiſing himſelf, cried,

"Save me, Raymond, that hand is unjuſtly arm'd againſt—"

"Monſter," ſaid the chief, "is it *thee*? confeſs thy crimes; ſay, where is Earl William?—where is my brother?"

" My Lord," and he called to a martial figure, whoſe face, hidden by his beaver, I could not diſcern; " here is the monſter, to whom my family owes its ruin; ſpeak, Deſpencer?"

" Deſpencer," replied a voice, that almoſt annihilated me, " where is the murderer? let *me* diſpatch Fitzroy's aſſaſſin."

" Fitzroy," interrupted Ella, in a low faint tone."

" O what Fitzroy? be not alarmed," reſumed De Vallenciennes, ſoftly preſſing the hand ſhe had unknowingly laid upon his; the name perhaps was ideal, and invoked merely to give countenance to an atrocious deed; at leaſt it cannot, I ſhould imagine, affect *you*; ſo ſaying, he examined her countenance with a critical accuracy."

" I beg pardon," anſwered Ella, turning from his ardent obſervation, and recovering to

to a ſtate of agonizing terror—but your deſcription of the ſhocking ſcene."

"Proceed, my Lord," ſaid Lambert, who trembled for his dear Ella, "and forgive the effect of virgin ſenſibility." With a graceful bow the youth proceeded.

"Perhaps I ſhould ſooner have conſidered how little the gentleneſs of female minds accords with ſuch ſanguinary views as I have already touched, and have ſtill farther to elucidate."

"Think not of me," cried the timid ſobbing girl; "I beſeech you proceed."

"But will not your feeling heart be ſtill more deeply agitated, when you are informed, that the falſely accuſed victim lifted up a diſpairing eye to his awful interrogator; and overcame by feebleneſs, or ſome latent motive, attempted, in a ſubmiſſive attitude, to deprecate

deprecate his fury—a momentary pauſe enſued."

"Die," ſaid the chief, whoſe features were not yet diſcovered, "die, thou deſtroyer of the virtuous Fitzroy."

His arm was lifted up, but Earl William's brother arreſted the blow.

"Firſt ſay, Deſpencer, how you executed the diabolical plan?"

While he was ſpeaking, Deſpencer's aſſaſſinator, by ſome accident, dropped his beaver, and diſcovered the dreadful Mortimer.

"Yes," ſaid my venerable friend, "I *muſt* die, but I die innocent, Mortimer knows."

Not more quick falls the lightning on the ſtubborn oak, than fell the deteſted murderer's

ſword upon the ſufferer; alas, I could not help him; "but here I ſwear," and he lifted up his hands, "never to reſt, 'till Mortimer pays, with his heart's blood, for all the pangs I then ſuffered."

Dear ſacrifice to that deteſted villain; Lambert, he turned upon me *ſuch* a look, the fear of death had then no ſhare in it; the blow was ſtruck, his apprehenſions faded into certainty.

"Raymond," he faintly exclaimed, "thou art not my ſon."

"Not his ſon! what an additional ſurpriſe, for 'till that moment I had always conſidered myſelf as ſuch. Say then? I eagerly replied, to whom —"

"Separate them," interrupted Mortimer, "no more plots."

The

The generous commander then interpoſed his authority.

" My Lord," ſaid he, " they ſhall *not* be ſeparated; you have already done a deed of violence, for which no oſtenſible cauſe can be given, at leaſt not *your* friendſhip for our ruined houſe. Had he fallen by *my* hand, juſtice might have exonerated *me* from blame.

I was near enough to obſerve the changes of the aſſaſſin's countenance, in which indignation, guilt, and even fear, ſeemed to preſide; while his whole form ſhook, and his words were ſo confuſed, as not to be underſtood."

" Deſpencer again lifting his head, beckoned me to come nearer—but convulſive ſpaſms interfering he could only repeat, in broken accents,"

" Thou art *not my ſon*;" *and then*, in a wild and hollow tone,——" that cloſet,—— the dungeon;——Ranulph knows;

" O where is that ſweet maid? they call her Ella: go to Spencer houſe; it was a deed of darkneſs——but Mortimer."

" Yes, whatever was the myſtery hinted at, *it died* with the murdered Earl, for he ſpoke no more; at leaſt I was not permitted to profit by what he might further ſay, as he was carried, or dragged rather, by that monſter's commands, from his helpleſs Raymond."

De Vallenciennes ſtopped to wipe his eyes, while Lambert turned a look upon Adela, compriſing aſtoniſhment, dread and horror. Ella now caught his arm;

" My father, this is terrible."

" Peace,

" Peace, my child," ſaid the old man, " this melancholy ſubject is too much for you."

" Too much! O, this is ſurely the criſis."

" Lead her out, Adela—my love, the air will reſtore you."

" Poor child," reſumed he, when ſhe was departed, " ſhe has a good, but too tender heart."

Raymond was amazed; the name had ſtruck *him*, but the impoſſibility of connecting Ella's ſituation, with the broken and imperfect hints given by a dying creature, deſtroyed every ſuſpicion her behaviour might have encouraged, and he naturally concluded his ſhocking account had occaſioned thoſe violent emotions, which even reached his ear from the little garden, in hyſterical ſobbings, and deep audible ſighs.

" I have now little more to add," ſaid he, " but my own eſcape, which was effected during an altercation between the chief and Mortimer, whoſe courage, built upon Deſpencer's fall, ſuddenly roſe to the height of inſolence; ſecure of ſafety, I would now go to Spencer houſe; I would interrogate that Ranulph, who was maſter of his horſe; but it would at preſent be certain death: he told me I was not *his* ſon; he referred me to a cloſet for explanation, but doubtleſs, could I examine it, his papers are deſtroyed; I ſhould find no teſtimonies of my birth.

De Vallenciennes then ſunk into a long and ſullen ſilence, which received very little interruption from the dinner preparation, and refuſing to partake of the ſcanty meal, he wandered into the wood, nor returned 'till evening approached, when he found Lambert quite alone, who reſpectfully repreſented to his unhappy gueſt, the danger he incurred by lingering near a ſpot, which they were ſorrowfully convinced, offered no ſecurity.

With

With a deep ſigh, Raymond aroſe from a bench, on which he had thrown himſelf;

"True, Lambert, I *muſt* go, but *whither*; I am of conſequence now to nobody; I have no claim to family honours, where they even recoverable; the names I bear, belong to a once illuſtrious houſe in Germany, and which, 'till this ſad explanation took place, I underſtood were only added to that of Deſpencer: but is my honour leſs delicate than before? have I not a ſoul as noble, courage as pure, principles as unſullied, as when I fancied myſelf ſo greatly connected? deſert not thyſelf, then, De Vallenciennes; is not the ſtream as pure, which meanders along the humble glade, as that which flows from the ſtately fountain? and who knows?"

A ſudden hope crimſoned his cheek, and blazoned in his fine eyes.

"Who knows but my origin may be greater than I once ſuppoſed; that thought

ſhall ſuſtain me; and now, Lambert, once more adieu; if ever De Vallenciennes' name ſhall reach your ear, it ſhall come united with nobility, and crowned with victory: one queſtion anſwered, and I give no further trouble."

Lambert trembled, for he anticipated the requeſt; Ella's ſafety, perhaps life, might hang upon his lips, for he doubted not, but there *was* a connexion between her fate and Deſpencer's dying words, but of what import he was entirely ignorant; and to tell an untruth, Lambert knew was wrong.

"Tell me," reſumed Raymond, "is that gentle girl, whoſe ſenſibility charms, while it pierces the heart, *is* ſhe *your* daughter? ſay you are the happy father of ſo much ſweetneſs, and I aſk no farther?"

What a moment for poor Lambert; he looked to the door for an interruption, but

Adela

Adela was in her little chamber, and Ella, being ſomewhat recovered, had taken her favourite walk.

" You heſitate, Lambert; I am anſwered; the father of ſo ſweet a virgin, would glory in his paternal relationſhip; this myſtery ſeems impenetrable; it may not be ſo always: adieu, offer my fervent commendation to that lovely maid, and your friendly Adela: we may meet again; I reſpect your ſincerity, and can offer no temptation ſtrong enough to overcome your fidelity, which, while paſſion laments, prudence muſt admire. He then, without waiting for an anſwer, ſought the moſt unfrequented paths.

The moon was now riſen, but enveloped in ſuch a miſt, as to afford but little aſſiſtance to the benighted traveller; yet was this inconvenience of little conſequence to De Vallenciennes, whoſe dangerous ſituation, added to the diſturbed ſtate of his mind, precluded

an attention to what he then deemed a trifle, and he plung'd into the thickeſt woods, heedleſs of the heavy droppings of an autumnal fog.

But in ſomewhat more than two hours, it abated, though not 'till he had gained the ſkirts of thoſe deep receſſes, which half ſurrounded an extenſive plain, when lifting up his heavy eye, to contemplate a curious halo that encompaſſed the moon, he was rather ſtartled by a blaze of light which he immediately diſcerned to ſtream from a vaſt building facing the wood; that part on which the faint rays of the friendly planet fell, appeared in perfect repair, the reſt involved in deep ſhadow, preſented no intelligence reſpecting its ſituation.

Cautious and ſlowly De Vallenciennes advanced, through a long and wide avenue of firs, when he was ſurpriſed by the appearance of two centinels, leaning over a low

low broad wall, which interfered between a deep foſſe, and the large paved court, extending along the whole front.

. . . . . .

Fearful of being diſcovered by the glare of light which fell upon him from ſeveral windows in the body of the fabric, he paſſed ſilently along under the wall, through a ſmall gothic gate, which luckily being unfaſtened, opened a paſſage to the weſt end of the caſtle, from which a military road led through almoſt impenetrable wilds.

Glad to eſcape what might have for ever impeded any further progreſs through life, he haſtened with a quicker ſtep, and lighter heart, to the edge of a ſteep hill, when ſitting down, he turned to take a more diſtinct view of the ancient, but noble fortifications, and with ſome difficulty traced, through the gloom, the black turrets lowering over the platform below; for the moon had not yet illumined the weſt end of the building.

Secure from interruption, Raymond fell into meditations of no very pleaſant nature. The murder of Deſpencer; his laſt myſterious words; the uncertainty of his own birth, were brought forward, to receive the laſt tincture of bitterneſs from his ignorance of Lambert's connexions with the ſweet Ella.

The ſilence and ſolemnity of the ſcene, prolonged his ſtay, and notwithſtanding a chill damp, which pervaded his garments, De Vallenciennes ſunk into a tranſient repoſe, which his late fatigue, and long watching, rendered abſolutely neceſſary.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Ruin from man is moſt conceal'd when near,
And ſends the dreadful tidings in the blow.

YOUNG.

NOT long was this diſtreſſed exile permitted to enjoy the invigorating bleſſing of ſleep: ſomething, but what, he could not aſcertain, awoke him: he trembled; a cold dew broke upon his forehead, and his limbs ſhook with terror: he attempted to riſe, but the unaccountable impreſſion he had received,

ed, abſolutely oppoſed his wiſh to leave that place.

For ſeveral minutes Raymond ſat in a painful ſtupor; but a deep, yet hollow voice, completely rouſed him, and in the agony of expectation, he turned his eyes towards the caſtle, when, on the other ſide of the foſſe, that entirely ſurrounded it, he ſaw, by the aſſiſtance of the moon, which now ſhone with a froſty brightneſs, a human figure, ſtanding upon the extreme edge of the wall beyond: it appeared tall, and covered with a looſe garment; aſhamed of his late unjuſtifiable fears—fears ſo incompatible with his natural courage, and convinced, from certain emotions, that they had originated from the awful tones which a third time reached his ear.

De Vallenciennes aroſe, and ventured back to the foſſe; the figure ſtood ſtill, with its hands raiſed in a ſupplicating attitude, and its

its pale haggard countenance, on which the moon ſhone, lifted to heaven.

Fearful of being over heard from the caſtle, and uncertain as to the object before him, Raymond ſoftly inquired if he could be of ſervice to him.

The figure ſtarted—look'd round—then at him, when the ſhutting of a door or gate, from the oppoſite turret, ſeemed to prevent the requeſt he was going to make, and the poor creature haſtily with-drawing, entered a ſmall aperture, opening on the ſide of the fabric next Raymond, and was ſeen no more.

Unable to inveſtigate a circumſtance ſo full of myſtery, he could only ſuppoſe the figure he had ſeen to be a religious, who, in obedience to the rules of his order, preſerved an invariable ſilence to the interrogating ſtranger, and was walking there at midnight, by way of penance.

That

That a religious ſhould reſide in a caſtle, was an error which eſcaped De Vallenciennes, in his ready arrangement; and he prepared to continue his journey through a narrow defile, between the mountain he was deſcending, and a range of hills winding to the right.

The clock from the weſt turret now ſtruck two, echoing between the hills; he ſtop'd a moment, to obſerve the fine effect of the ſound reverberating ſo diſtinctly, as to make the original ſtrokes rather difficult to ſeparate from the echo.

But a noiſe of a more intereſting nature diſturbed, and convinced the unfortunate wanderer, that danger, if not death, murmured in the breeze.

He had no arms, and the tumult he heard, added to the beating of horſes hoofs upon the hollow ground, urged the neceſſity of avoiding the path, in which he rightly conjectured they were

were advancing: there was little time for determining, ſtill leſs for debate, upon a ſubject ſo preſſing; he therefore ſtep'd aſide, and though completely ſheltered by the underwood from their notice, he could ſafely obſerve the motions of a party of horſemen winding along the military road.

There was light ſufficient to perceive they were ſoldiers; but the war of elements, the groans of the dying; the deciſion of his own fate, would have been muſic to Raymond's ears, compared to Mortimer's dreadful voice, thundering awful execrations on his followers, for not uſing more ſpeed.

At the moment of their paſſing, the turbulent tones ſunk into the gentleſt ſtrain, while he appeared to be ſoothing a perſon wrapped in a large cloak, who was placed before another chief, by the ſide of whom Mortimer rode.

The

The whole party had now paſſed, and were aſcending the caſtle hill; and Raymond, alive to every feeling indignation, ſorrow and pity could renew, walked ſlowly through the defile.

The dawn had now opened to our traveller a wintry, yet lovely ſcene. The almoſt leafleſs trees, adding to its beauty, for their numerous branches, bending nearly to the ground, could ſcarcely ſupport a ſilver rime which had fallen in the early part of the night, and by a ſudden froſt, was rendered ſtationary, and which ſparkled with a dazzling radiance, as the ſun threw his horrizontal beams over the whitened landſcape.

Faint, cold and ſpiritleſs, he felt not the enthuſiaſm of a vivid imagination; he felt that eaſe, warmth, and plenty, was neceſſary to heighten the enjoyment, and ſaw, with little regret, the ſoftening rays diſſolve the glittering viſion. For ſeveral days, he endured.

dured ſuch toils, as none but a mind and body, invigorated with health and fortitude, could withſtand.

Fearful of diſcovery, he avoided every village, where his wants could be compleatly gratified, nor ſtopped but at places, where the inhabitants were too poor, or too buſy, to encourage much curioſity.

On the fifth day of his departure from Lambert's cottage, De Vallenciennes ſtopped before an obſcure houſe, not large enough to deſerve the name of an inn. It was ſituated on the edge of a common, not more than twelve hours journey from the capital; while he was wreſting upon a bench near the door, a well dreſſed perſon alighted from his horſe, which he ordered an attendant to hold.

Raymond was retiring from the traveller's ardent gaze, when he found his hand detained, and looking up, ſaw Ranulph.

That

That Ranulph, his dying friend had ſo pathetically charged him to ſeek.

"You are ſafe, my Lord," ſaid the man, "be not afraid, I will protect you from your enemies: the King, who you know has been long confined, is now, we think, no more.

Mortimer, to whom the moſt imperious ſubject muſt bend, is lately arrived, with Iſabella; they have been ſome days abſent from London; it is too true, that the reſt of your family are deſtroyed; but *you* have nothing to fear, the youthful Edward has put a ſtop to the horrors of war, and hourly laments his father's fate: come, then, my dear Lord, I am going to Spencer-houſe; that houſe you were once the happy inhabitant of, is now mine; but while you honour it with your preſence, you ſhall be maſter of that and me."

Deſpencer's injunctions; the myſtery of the cloſet; his own uncertain origin, all were now

now to be explained, inveſtigated, and obeyed; and what argued ſtill more forcibly to his ſpirited and patriotic feelings, Mortimer, the treacherous murderous Mortimer, might be within the reach of his juſtifiable revenge.

With a heart, then, once more alive to hope, though touched with the livelieſt ſorrow for the fate of a monarch, by whom he had been affectionately diſtinguiſhed, and whom he faithfully loved, and all but adored, as well as for the deſtruction of a family, to which he had been indebted for every advantage wealth and grandeur could beſtow.

He arrived in London, attended by Ranulph, who put him in immediate poſſeſſion of that ſuit of apartments lately belonging to his revered friend.

It ſo happened, that his natural impetuoſity received ſome little check from the conſideration, that though to Lambert he had been

been totally unreſerved, yet the refined courtier, always remarkable for a mean ſervility, had no preſent claim to his confidence, and Raymond, after mentioning, in general terms, his unfortunate expedition, cautiouſly avoided particularizing Deſpencer's laſt broken references to Ranulph; at leaſt he was determined to examine the written evidences he expected to find in the cloſet, before he ventured to interrogate Ranulph on the ſubject of his birth.

After a ſumptuous entertainment, compoſed of the moſt coſtly viands, De Vallenciennes retired to the anti-chamber, leading to that in which he expected to find thoſe precious teſtimonials that were to elucidate the ſtrange circumſtances hinted by his Lord Deſpencer.

The night was cold, but the large fires blazing in the ſeveral rooms belonging to that ſuite, diffuſed not only a comfortable warmth

warmth through them, but gave an air of cheerfulneſs to the gloomy grandeur, which every where met his eye; for theſe apartments were furniſhed with the higheſt luxury of the times; pale blue velvet curtains, trimmed and fringed with gold, formed a juſt contraſt to the dark poliſhed oak wainſcot, the mouldings of which were richly carved and gilded, as were the ſtately chimney piece and coſtly frames that ſupported the almoſt invaluable marble tables between the windows.

De Vallenciennes threw a melancholy look over theſe mementos of Deſpencer's magnificent ſpirit; but the contemplation of his portrait, caſt a deeper ſhade over his mournful ideas, which the hallowed tear of friendſhip was not calculated to diſpel; catching the ſtranger with his handkerchief, as it fell upon his cheek, and fixing a melancholy eye upon the picture;

"O thou," ſaid he, "for whom my haughty ſoul laments, with moſt unmanly ſorrow:

ſorrow: thou, whoſe memory muſt ever live in Raymond's boſom, pardon the weakneſs you would, in earlier life, have ridiculed: for thee, for thy untimely death, was reſerved the conqueſt of a ſpirit, nothing leſs could have over-whelmed.

Dear ſhade of him, I have ſworn to revenge; could ye bear witneſs, I would repeat an oath, already regiſtered by juſtice."

The entrance of Ranulph, ſtifled the emotions of his labouring heart, and Raymond anſwered his friendly offers of aſſiſtance with a tolerable grace, but declined his company, under the excuſe of fatigue, promiſing he would immediately retire, in compliance with his hoſt's earneſt requeſt.

Once more left alone, he entered the bed-chamber, whoſe furniture correſponded in richneſs with that he had left; but the purple damaſk hanging, gave the bed a heavy

appearance, not being relieved with the glare of gold trimmings.

Directly oppoſite to the entrance, ſtood the memorable cloſet: the key was in the lock, and readily gave way to his eager hand; to the left of the door ſtood a ſmall, but curiouſly ornamented cabinet, the front of which was ſlightly cloſed.

"This cabinet," ſaid he, "will elucidate every thing;" but to Raymond's diſappointment, the drawers were inacceſſible: ſtanding a moment to conſider, he heard a hollow voice, diſtinctly pronounce his name. De Vallenciennes, as we have obſerved, poſſeſſed an intrepid ſoul, but this was a circumſtance, ſeemingly ſupernatural.

"Be it ſo," he cried, "at worſt it can but be a warning from the late dear poſſeſſor of theſe apartments."

He then adverted to the ſtrange appearance which ſurpriſed him, and which, at the time, he ſuppoſed was a religious, the voice of whom ſounded portentous, as he then thought, and had alarmed him from the terrace of the caſtle; and though they were extremely unlike, the combination was by no means particular, ſince he was now ready to conjecture they might proceed from one cauſe; and his imagination, which was poſſibly tinged with the ſuperſtition of thoſe early ages readily aſſociated them.

A repetition of his name, tended to ground in him the notion that danger was at hand, though from what agent, he could not conjecture; but after a few minutes conſideration, he again attempted to open the drawers, and again was diſappointed, 'till looking round, with a hopeleſs eye, he fixed it upon a pannel of the wainſcot, which ſeemed ſhrunk from the moulding; almoſt without a motive, he went up to it, and found it

ſhake

ſhake under his fingers; the myſtery was ſoon explained, the board ſlid back, and diſcovered a ſmall neſt of drawers curiouſly let into the wall. Here then, thought Raymond, ends my doubtful ſearch, and he opened ſeveral of them, but found little elſe than old records, manuſcripts, and papers relative to the eſtates Deſpencer had formerly poſſeſſed.

Theſe, he ſoon found, were not to his purpoſe, and was about to ſhut the pannel, when ſomething fell with a ſlight ſound to the ground; ſtooping with his lamp to examine it, Raymond perceived it was a ring of great value, not ſuch as the Knights of Malta were accuſtomed to wear; he immediately opened the drawers again, when one came entirely out, and behind it lay ſeveral papers.

De Vallenciennes ſeized one, it was a letter; the name of Fitzroy was conſpicuous in ſeveral places; he began to read it with eagerneſs; and though the voice again called in hollow

ſounds upon his name, it had loſt its power with him; but before he had read three lines, a buſtle at the door of the anti-chamber, induced him to throw the letter back, ſhut the drawer, and cloſe the pannel, with leſs preciſion than it was before.

The noiſe increaſed, and then ſuddenly ſubſided; all was ſtill for a few moments, when he diſtinctly heard the words,

"Fly, or you are loſt—fly, or you muſt ſuffer, as I have done."

Amazed, and abſolutely confuſed, Raymond went to the outward door, with an intent to leave thoſe rooms, but was deterred by the renewing of the clamour, which had rather ſtartled him.

He had no arms, nor could he juſtly ſuppoſe he needed any, 'till the lock gave way, and Ranulph entered, with ſeveral ſoldiers.

Raymond

Raymond inſtinctively ſhrunk back, but the countenance of his *friend* ſomewhat reaſſured him.

"I expected to have found my honoured Lord in bed, and am amazed to meet him here."

"I could have diſpenſed," replied De Vallenciennes, "with this unneceſſary civility."

"Pardon, my good Lord, the neceſſity that urges me to ſuch an untimely viſit—but Mortimer has diſcovered your retreat, and inſiſts upon my giving you up; I have already made every reſiſtance, conſiſtent with my duty, as a ſubject, and the friendſhip I owe my Lord, but——"

"Sycophant, avaunt," ſaid the inflamed De Vallenciennes; "traitor, I diſdain a moment's altercation with thee; my doom is

fixed, but thou art only the cowardly inſtrument," and then turning to the guards, who he now perceived not only crowded from the right and left of the gallery, but even filled the firſt flight of ſtairs.

" Conduct me," he cried, ſtepping forward at the ſame moment; " conduct me any where, ſo this fiend in human ſhape, adds not to my ſorrows."

So ſaying, he ſullenly, and with an air of majeſty, deſcended into the hall between the ſoldiers, who reſpectfully made a lane for him to paſs; at the bottom ſtood an officer, once the confidential companion of the unhappy De Vallenciennes.

" I pity you, my Lord," ſaid he, " you are infamouſly betrayed, but I cannot help you; pleaſe to walk this way?"

Still ſullenly ſilent, Raymond followed to the great door, which led into a court-yard; here

here he found a number of horſes, one of which he was deſired to mount, while the others were occupied by the ſoldiers, appointed as a guard, and with a look compoſed of indeſcribable emotions, and feelings impoſſible to delineate juſtly, he turned from the once hoſpitable fabric, where he had paſſed the gay hours of juvenility, and enjoyed the indulgent protection of his more than parent.

Then, in every eye, he met admiration or obedience, now, treachery concealed under the thin veil of reluctant compulſion, or a forced reſpect extorted by the dignity of his manners.

* * * * * * * * * *

The word was now iſſued for their departure; the officer, with real concern, placed himſelf by the ſide of Raymond, who again looked up at the manſion, on which the torches threw uncertain gleams.

He ſighed a long adieu to the hope of elucidating his birth, and the myſtery which,

in the only letter he could glance at, alluded, as he thought, to Ella.

" Ella, O what ideas connected themſelves with that lovely virgin's fate?"

Lambert—Adela—the lonely cottage.

Dark was the retroſpect, and he quitted it only becauſe it threw freſh horrors on the preſent hour.

The proceſſion moved, the great gates cloſed upon the train; the heavy faſtenings ſtruck to the ſoul of De Vallenciennes, but his fate was inevitable, and he ſubmitted in ſilence.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Nimble miſchance that art ſo light of foot,
Doth not thy embaſſage belong to me?

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE grief, rage, and indignation confined their ſtifled effects to Raymond's boſom, as he ſlowly marched along the road, north of London, a deep and heavy ſorrow had ſeized the ſouls of his honeſt hoſt at the cottage, who lamented his uncertain deſtiny,

with that energy which pity ſuggeſts, even againſt the cool dictates of reaſon, and ſelf commiſeration, nor heeded the advance of night, 'till its gloom began to envelop the woody wilds;

When Adela, riſing from her wheel, and looking abroad,

"I think," ſaid ſhe, "the day ſhuts in extremely cold; beſides, it is almoſt dark, ought we not to expect our child?"

"Certainly," replied Lambert, "I will go to ſeek her; ſhe cannot be far off."

Adela was ſilent, for ſhe could not put a negative upon his benevolent intention; and yet, ſhe remembered his former ſucceſsleſs ſearch; but ſhe loved Ella, and began to be uneaſy for her; therefore, with her warmeſt injunctions and wiſhes for his ſpeedy return, ſhe ſuffered her huſband to depart, carefully drawing the bolt after him, and then turned

up

up the hour glaſs, watching the ſand as it ſlowly dropped through. It ran out, but ſtill ſhe was alone.

Her heart began to palpitate; her eye was fixed to the door; her ear caught the ſlightest noiſe; the very cricket behind her chimney, ſeemed, in its melancholy note, to warn her of miſchief.

Again the glaſs was turned up, and again ran out.

O it was too much, Lambert and Ella were both for ever gone.

Yes, ſhe thought.

That pale figure my huſband ſaw at the window, portended his death.

Poor Adela was preciſely in that ſituation, which precludes the operation of our reaſon-

ing faculties, and prevents, by the torpor it creates, even the means alone by which fear can be removed, for Adela could not *pray*.

Thus ſhe ſat for half an hour more, when looking at the latch, ſhe ſaw it move very ſlowly—but it *did* move.

She ſtarted up—Lambert ſpoke; ſhe joyfully undrew the bolt.

Her countenance fell—he was alone; ſhe burſt into tears.

"My child, Lambert; where is my Ella?"

He turned his eyes mournfully round the room.

"I thought, Adela, I hoped at leaſt to have found her with you, but I now fear ſhe is gone indeed; ſweet creature, what a fate is

is her's; my heart forebodes ſome terrible misfortunes; would to heaven that impetuous ſtranger had not ſeen her.

"You do not, ſurely, Lambert, you cannot ſuſpect that gallant Lord."

Lambert ſhook his head; he had noticed Raymond's admiration of his young charge; he had watched his eager glances, and remembered that curioſity, which had given him ſo much uneaſineſs; a curioſity Raymond had evidently attempted to ſuppreſs. Dark and terrible ſuſpicions paſſed through his mind, but he now found it neceſſary to conceal them from his wife, and with one conſent, actuated as it were, by one impreſſion, they humbly knelt, and offered up the ſincereſt petitions for her ſafety.

The ſacrifice was acceptable, and reſignation ſanctified the tear they ſhed.

As

As night advanced, Adela trimmed her lamp, and Lambert repleniſhed the fire with his choiceſt billets, reſolved to wait the tedious approach of morning, when he determined, with his partner's hearty concurrence, to recommence his hitherto unprofitable ſearch.

Poor Ella, her's was indeed a perilous ſituation. Prevented, by intenſe meditation, upon the occurrences of the two paſt days, from attending to the path ſhe had choſen, her rambles were extended to a greater diſtance than ſhe had ever before ventured; and the gloom of evening, while it awakened her from that torpor of thought, which not ſeldom ſucceeds an unuſual energy of imagination, arouſed in her a ſenſe of danger.

From Lambert's deſcription, ſhe fancied herſelf near the fabric he had deſcribed, and almoſt expected to hear a repetition of thoſe groans, to which, even Lambert himſelf, could

ſcarcely

ſcarcely liſten, without an acknowledged tremor.

Ella, though free from that exceſs of timidity which borders upon affectation, poſſeſſed not ſufficient intrepidity to baniſh ideal horrors.

Darkneſs, lonelineſs, a dread of enemies, of whom ſhe too late recollected her former reaſons for ſhunning, were too ſhocking, when combined, for female delicacy to encounter, without ſhrinking; and inceſſantly did ſhe bewail the temerity that had plunged her into ſuch difficulty; all that could now be done, was to retrace, if poſſible, the path ſhe had ſo unwarily purſued; but as the day declined, every object was loſt in the obſcurity of a thick fog.

Ella was now ſeriouſly diſtreſſed; uncertain whether to advance or recede, ſhe had very little choice left, every ſtep being the effect

effect of chance, nor knew ſhe, but thoſe ſhe ventured to take, might lead her ſtill farther from the dear lamented cottage, and her ſorrowing friends.

All was now drearily ſilent, except the melancholy owl: even her own quick and light footſteps, were ſcarcely heard; now ruſhing through the underwood—now ſuddenly ſtopping, as fancy wafted to her agitated thought the ſound of voices, which exiſted but in her terrified imagination. One minute the unreſtrained tears would pour over her cold aſhy cheek; the next they were momentarily ſuppreſſed by a faint and ill-ſupported hope.

Still ſhe paſſed on, when every preſent inconvenience was increaſed by a moſt painful difficulty, for ſhe was now arrived at a part of the wood, which proved extremely ſwampy, and the wet ſoon pervaded the ſlight covering that defended her feet. It had occurred.

red to her, that the track ſhe was now purſuing, might end in a deep and dangerous bog, ſuch as ſhe had heard Lambert deſcribe, and ſhe again ſtopt in an agony, that defied the effect of patience to conquer; for even the moon ſeemed to withhold her beams, though Ella imagined ſhe muſt be riſen; but all was impenetrably dark.

No diſtant light ſtreamed upon her humid eye; no veſtige of human kind cheared her drooping heart. Thus entangled, perplexed, and ready to ſink, ſhe was no longer reſigned; deep and heavy ſighs broke from her fluttering boſom, and in wild and broken, but low accent, ſhe exclaimed,

"Miſerable creature, what, at laſt, is to be thy fate? ſnatch'd from the moſt formidable dangers, merely to encounter, in a protracted deſtiny, ſorrows yet more dreadful.

"Lambert — Adela, deareſt ineſtimable friends; what muſt now be your anguiſh? are

are ye not weeping for the child you ſo generouſly adopted? perhaps wandering amidſt theſe gloomy receſſes, ye are ſeeking your poor loſt Ella."

She pauſed, then added,

"Who can tell but ye are now near enough to hear my voice? ſuppoſe I were to attempt to make myſelf heard?—yes, but if the enemies I have been taught to dread—"

It was a point, which, her ſituation conſidered, admitted but little debate, and in a fearful, reſtrained tone, ſhe pronounced the name of Lambert.

The name of Lambert was repeated in low whiſpers, but what occaſioned it, ſhe could not tell; no other anſwer followed.

Emboldened by deſpair, ſhe called ſtill louder, and again the name was repeated in louder terms.

Almoſt

Almoſt diſtracted with this fearful interpretation, ſhe exclaimed, deprived juſt then of every aſſiſtance from fortitude,

" O ye, who ſport with the feelings of a wretched maid, do not, if human, like myſelf, add terrors to this awful moment, but pity the unhappy Ella."

" Unhappy Ella," whiſpered the ſhocking object of her increaſing fears.

" This can be no human voice," ſhe cried, " ſure I am, it is a phantom."

" It is a phantom," it repeated, in ſtill plainer terms.

Ella now wiſked ſuddenly back, and as ſuddenly turned to the left, when, as if hope gained vigour, even from diſappointment, ſhe continued to call 'till the powers of articulation were nearly exhauſted, but her aeriel correſpon-

correſpondent was now ſilent; when almoſt frantic with apprehenſion, ſhe again moved onwards, tears and heavy ſobs mixing with another affecting apoſtrophe to the protectors ſhe loved.

" No," ſhe cried, " never, never ſhall I ſee you again; thoſe mild and tranquil hours, their tenderneſs, ſo much endeared, are gone for ever. With you I regretted not the deprivation of riches, ſplendor, or the honours appropriated to high birth.

" The remembrance of a father, loſt by means horrible to recollect; of a mother—*ſuch* a mother; of an uncle—dear revered ſaviour of a helpleſs niece—all, all were thrown into the back ground of memory, or when brought forward, were but as ſhades to allay the bright glare of happineſs. The tears I ſhed for them, were meliorated by the ſweet conſideration of their virtues; and while I wept to a ſenſe of their ſufferings, felt a conſolation

conſolation in the idea, that I had yet protectors; but now—"

Once more overcome by the acuteneſs of grief, ſhe wandered in ſilence; and while giving every black idea the moſt gloomy tint, perceived not that ſhe was ſlowly aſcending, 'till the change of ſoil, from a ſoft clay to hard gravel, by no longer impeding her weary ſteps, recalled her ſcattered thoughts, and ſhe lifted her eyes to a quarter, where the trees ſtood not ſo thick, appearing alſo ſomewhat plainer than they had yet done: ſhe was not deceived, it grew lighter.

The wood ſwept away to the left, and ſhe ſoon gained a part of the foreſt, which was almoſt cleared, and beheld before her a hollow way, ſurmounted by the ruins of an ancient wall, poſſibly that of Severus, which could be traced through various parts of England, as a noble work of that Roman Emperor.

Here

Here ſhe ſtop'd, liſtening with new terror to the ſound of a light footſtep, apparently on the oppoſite ſide.

She ſtopt, but could not hear it—then ruſhing forwards, again the ſound returned upon the heavy air, when, to her joyful ſurpriſe, ſhe perceived it to ariſe from the echo of her own feet, and felt much of her anxiety ſubſide, from the pleaſing ſuppoſition, that the anſwers which had given her ſo much diſtreſs, were formed by the reverberation of her own voice: ſhe alſo diſcovered, that while it ſo diſtinctly repeated her words, ſhe was advancing nearer to the ſpot ſhe now contemplated, than when ſhe took the left hand path, which in the agony of fear ſhe then purſued.

To Ella, who had been immerſed in what is ſo beautifully denominated darkneſs viſible, the watry appearance of a pale moon, which barely diſcovered itſelf, was an object animatingly

tingly lovely; and though her fears were not conquered, or her fatigue abſolutely leſſened, yet her real inconveniences were not ſo important.

It is true, ſhe was ſhocked to find, by the moon's ſituation, that ſhe had been ſtraying ſtill farther from the cottage, nor could ſhe dare again to enter the diſmal woods, which barely to look back upon, ſhook every limb with terror; all that could be done then, was to keep to the edge of them, which ſhe thought might bring her round to the front of Lambert's dwelling; and with a degree of courage, ſupplied by renovated ſpirits, ſhe briſkly entered a rude path, ſcarcely diſcernable, from the rough hillocks over which ſhe ſometimes ſtumbled.

Ella now endeavoured to elude the tedious way, by dwelling upon the honeſt extacy with which ſhe ſhould be received; and as there was light enough to unfold the near landſcape,

landſcape, at leaſt ſo much of it, as the woodman's hand had cleared, by felling the different clumps of trees; ſhe tried to believe ſhe had ſeen it before, but the deception was ſoon viſible—all was ſtrange and unknown to her; no hut, no houſe, no ſigns of cultivation, nor even could ſhe any further trace the path that had hitherto ſerved for a faint direction. Sometimes between the trees ſhe caught an imperfect view of what ſhe conjectured to be vaſt eminences; but theſe were ſo much obſcured by the fog which ſtill partly enveloped their ſhaggy ſides, that ſhe could not, with any certainty, pronounce them to be the hills of Stanmore, and if they were, it might not follow that the wiſhed for cot was ſheltered by that part of the chain.

While ſhe was gazing, with an eagerneſs that left no room for attention to the trackleſs way ſhe had choſen.

A figure

A figure appeared at a little diſtance, turning the angle of the old wall, which ſhe had before perceived, and which run parallel to the feet of thoſe eminencies ſhe was conſidering.

Ella ſtarted, and was ſhrinking unconſciouſly from what ſhe had before ſo ardently wiſhed for, the preſence of a human being.

So true it is, that we are often puniſhed with the grant of our requeſts.

She looked at it with an energy of terror, that was almoſt inſupportable; the figure approached, and ſhe had juſt perception enough to diſcover, it was no phantom, but a man, wretched perhaps as herſelf, for his geſtures were ſtrange.

His ſteps ſometimes quick, ſometimes ſlow and uncertain.

This, ſurely, was not an object to whom ſhe could apply.

It is true, ſhe might have avoided him, by flying to the interior part of the foreſt; but ſhe could not think—ſhe could not ſtir; every ſenſe was ſuſpended, but that of ſight.

Every faculty was powerleſs reſpecting her extrication from what Ella conceived to be danger in the extreme.

Thus faſcinated, ſhe watched the ſtranger's motions, and with a joy, that reſtored every fettered power, beheld him take an oppoſite direction, and in a few minutes, he was ſeen no more.

Ella once more moved alertly on, though ſhe ſeverely taxed her imbecility, that had deprived her of the poſſible chance of relief. She likewiſe, after beſtowing another look at the

the wall, which, though in many parts, was almoſt levelled with the ground, and in others totally hidden by the branching ivy, whoſe tendrils creeping over the looſe ſtones, had gained itſelf a permanent hold; yet ſhe doubted not but it was connected with ſome building not far off; and to confirm this idea, the ſound of ſeveral voices rolled on the wind, apparently from the quarter deſcribed by the wall.

It ſeemed to ariſe from the boſom of a glen, which bore the appearance of a park, though there was no trace of cultivation about it, and differed, very little, from the foreſt, excepting in the produce of the ſpot, conſiſting of long coarſe graſs, and rank weeds, and a rough road along the middle of it, marked out by old oaks, of ſuch irregular growth, as proved them to be the reſidents of centuries.

The contemplation of this wild ſcene, checked Ella's ardour to reach the hills; and the voices ſhe heard, was a ſtrong proof that ſhe muſt be near ſome habitation; therefore, after committing herſelf to the protection of that Providence, who had hitherto ſo graciouſly led her through the dreary wilderneſs, ſhe ventured to turn her ſteps towards the ruinous encloſure, and looking between the trees, a light was ſuddenly flaſhed upon the oak neareſt to the bottom of the road, not only proved the certainty of meeting with ſome of her own ſpecies, but threw its tranſient ray upon a range of buildings oppoſite to the track ſhe was in; a dog, likewiſe, by its loud and fierce barking, denoted its office, apparently to guard its maſters.

Slowly then, and with a trembling heart, the doubting virgin advanced half way down the avenue; and here the ground gently aſcended, 'till ſhe came ſuddenly to the entrance

trance of the edifice, part of which lay in ruins, and what remained covered in, was nothing more than a row of ſtabling, which had been lately repaired, for the purpoſe of accommodating the dogs and horſes of a neighbouring nobleman.

While Ella, ſhocked and depreſſed at the diſappointment of her hopes, which was that of meeting with ſome pitying female, ſtood helpleſs, forlorn, and painfully agitated; ſhe obſerved, by the glare of torches which was carried before him, a perſon of diſtinguiſhed rank, walking up to his horſe, while a groom held the ſtirrup for him to mount.

She ſighed, and ſoftly turning from the blaze that reflected on her pale face, ſilently began to deſcend the glen, not ſuppoſing herſelf in danger of diſcovery, as the road lay evidently to the right of the ſtables; but juſt as ſhe had gained the bottom of the

gentle declivity, ſhe felt herſelf pulled to the ground, with an inhuman violence, and only had power to utter a piercing ſhriek, when her ſenſes totally failed, before ſhe could aſcertain the cauſe of this frightful attack.

Her fit was long and alarming to thoſe, who hearing the exclamations of diſtreſs, had flown to her aſſiſtance; and when ſhe faintly lifted her heavy eye, it encountered an object which filled her with confuſion; but on looking again, ſhe was painfully undeceived.

It was not the noble De Vallenciennes, for her firſt baſhful glance had given a momentary hope, which the next immediately deſtroyed; it was indeed a majeſtic ſtranger, but he was older, nor was his bold uncheck'd admiration the admiration of Raymond.

To have aſked the pity and protection of one, whoſe figure repreſſed the modeſt advances of an unexperienced innocent, was totally

tally inimical to Ella's ſenſe of virgin dignity, which yet remained powerful enough to form a poſitive obſtacle to the ſmalleſt communication.

To ſhun his offers of aſſiſtance, ſhe knew was equally dangerous; as to eſcape, ſeemed nearly impoſſible. It is true, ſhe would have riſen, but the damp ground, her late fatigue, and unconquered terror, had compleatly enfeebled her aching limbs, and with a degree of delicate reluctance, ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be placed upon a horſe, who was gently led by a ſervant, to a road leading from the ruins.

Poor Ella now found oppoſition totally unavailable, and ſilently wept the occurrences which had thrown her into the power of a man, whoſe bold, and even licentious aſſiduity, in a ſituation that called upon the feeling heart for the moſt reſpectful pity, excited a ſenſation, bordering upon abhorrence.

From him ſhe underſtood, that her fall was occaſioned by the fierce attack of a large wolf dog, who diſcovered her as ſhe was creeping along the glen, to ſhun the notice ſhe was afraid to invite; and that agreeably to the nature of thoſe animals, he had ſeized her clothes, without barking, nor would let go his hold, 'till forced by the ſeverity of correction. She was likewiſe congratulated by her informant, upon her eſcape from the creature's teeth, owing, as he aſſerted, to the dog's ſuppoſing ſhe was dead, from the ſudden ſuſpenſion of her breath, in which caſe he was never known to exerciſe his ſavage propenſity.

Ella ſhuddered, and ſoftly ejaculated her grateful thanks, for the providential interference, and wrapping herſelf in a large cloak, which one of the attendants had procured, ſhe ſubmitted patiently to the exigence of the moment.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

External pomp and viſible ſucceſs,
Sometimes contribute to our happineſs;
But that which makes it genuine, refin'd,
Is a good conſcience, and a ſoul reſign'd.

POMFRET.

THE dawn which now began to tint the eaſt with a glow that promiſed more open weather, gave pleaſure to Ella's companions, while the froſty air induced them to quicken their pace, eager to ſeize the only comforts a ſenſual mind contemplates, in a ſituation like theirs.

Their chief, indeed, gave a larger ſcope to *his* deſires. Dark, deep and diſſimulating, he meditated the deſtruction of an innocent, whoſe ſufferings of the preceding evening, were of a nature to claim compaſſion from the moſt hardened.

To his free and unreſtrained addreſs, ſhe oppoſed a cold reluctant ear, and often raiſed her heavy hopeleſs eye to the diſtant hills, at the feet of which, ſhe fancied were ſpread Lambert's little domains.

When deeply ſighing, her imagination ſhrunk from the gay ſcenes ſo pompouſly deſcribed, and ſo viſibly enjoyed by her oſtentatious conductor, while the moderate and ſimple delights which content, freedom and virtue had endeared, roſe in painful perſpective to the excluſion of every wiſh but for their renewal.

Once,

Once, as his face was turned to the increaſing light, ſhe ſhuddered at a ſimilitude which conveyed the moſt horrible ideas, ſeeming even connected with murder.

She ventured even to look again, but a re-examination lightened not her foreboding heart; yet was the ſuſpicion loſt in the gloom that obſcured paſt events, and without aſcertaining exactly the diſagreeable cauſe, ſhe felt her diſlike increaſe, with every ſhy and abhorrent glance.

The unaffected averſion Ella expreſſed to his improper diſcourſe, at length ſilenced the indelicate *Nobleman*, for ſuch the addreſs and ſubmiſſion of his followers announced him, and ſhe was permitted to finiſh her little journey in peace.

They had now travelled ſomewhat more than an hour, when leaving the dreary wilds, they entered a cloſe lane, bordered by fields

richly cultivated; ſome exhibiting the latter corn, which a cold wet ſeaſon, ſo far north, had retarded from ripening, gently bending beneath the chill breeſe of morning; others luxurantly ſpread with the brighteſt green.

They had not rode far, when the lane ſuddenly opening, diſcovered an extenſive lawn; its ſpacious flat, relieved by an avenue of firs, in the prime of vegetation, which led to a magnificent ſeat: it was low, but compriſed a great extent of ground, and appeared as if lately built.

The ſound of a horn hanging at the front gate, was ſeveral times repeated, before any one approached, as it was plain their Lord was not expected. With a ſurly look, and a half uttered execration, he received the ſervants, who now trembled before him, and were officious to aſſiſt his unhappy charge to alight, whom they conducted into a vaſt and ſplendid hall.

Ella

Ella caſt a look of terror at the gigantic ſtatues, which ſeemed, from every ſide, to frown defiance; but an object deſcending the great ſtaircaſe, to the left of the front door, gave all the relief her anxious mind could then promiſe itſelf, and ſhe joyfully accepted the invitation of a decent female, to accompany her to a chamber.

"You will ſupply this lady with every accommodation this houſe can afford," ſaid the nobleman, "and —"

Here his voice ſunk into a low whiſper, as Ella moved forwards, and by that means not only prevented her hearing what he had further to ſay, but infuſed a ſuſpicion into her own boſom, of the painfulleſt nature: however, the exceſſive fatigue ſhe had endured, added to want of ſleep, and a univerſal feebleneſs, ſet aſide, for the preſent, every dread of the future; and after endeavouring to taſte ſome light refreſhment, ſhe gladly acceded

acceded to her attendant's requeſt, to occupy the bed ſhe had juſt riſen from, and ſunk into a ſlumber, which continued for ſeveral hours.

It was likely the harraſſed Ella might have paſſed the whole day in this compoſed ſtate, but the ſound of martial inſtruments echoing through the noble edifice, reſtored her to immediate reflection; and the ſun beams, which ſtreamed with a ſweet and mild radiance through the window oppoſite to the bed, informed her it muſt be near noon.

The loud and ſhrill tones, which had ſo rudely broke upon her repoſe, now ſuddenly ceaſed, and a ſolemn pauſe enſued, when a gentle movement, compoſed of ſuch ſweet and ſolemn ſtrains, as ſpoke to the ſoul of ſenſibility, murmured on her ear.

It was at firſt ſo low, as ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed, but roſe ſo ſoft, ſo clear, ſo melodious, that Ella, who was abſolutely faſcinated

faſcinated by the art, though for obvious reaſons, no profeſſor, felt every grief, every apprehenſion, every pain ſuſpended, while liſtening to the delicious harmony, and almoſt regretted the entrance of Urſula, to whoſe care ſhe was primarily committed, and who now brought her a change of apparel, (by no means coſtly) while her own was drying.

To her interrogatories reſpecting the houſe, its inhabitants, and their ſituation, ſhe received ſuch anſwers as deſtroyed every hope a lively imagination would encourage.

The ſeat was Lord Mortimer's, who had viſited the north of England, for a reaſon ſhe choſe not to explain. That they did not expect him 'till the enſuing evening, but ſhe ſuppoſed the arrival of his illuſtrious viſitors had induced him to travel in the night: ſhe farther ſaid, ſhe was told his horſes were incapable of reaching Mortimer Hall, therefore he

he had ſtopped at the ſtables to procure a relay, as he kept a number of ſteeds in different places, for the purpoſe of a ready ſupply.

Ella caught at the words *illuſtrious viſitors*, and upon aſking who they were, was informed, that the Queen, whoſe unbounded attachment for Mortimer, was no ſecret, arrived on the preceding day, with a numerous train.

The Queen—Mortimer! O what a ſhock thoſe names gave her languid frame; ſhe trembled, and turned ſtill paler than indiſpoſition had already made her.

"And was ſhe an inmate of Mortimer's? he who had dethroned his King, alienated his conſort's affection, and to cloſe the climax, was reported to be a murderer. Could ſhe be ſafe under ſuch protection?"—No.

There

There was an expreſſion in his countenance, evén while unknown, that ſhe dared not inveſtigate; and ſhe determined, without acquainting this woman with her intention to withdraw herſelf, as ſoon as a convenient opportunity occurred.

With an apology that was extremely grateful to Ella, her attendant left her, after ſetting before her delicacies, which ſhe turned from in ſilent diſguſt; and as ſoon as Urſula departed, ſhe began to conſider of a plan, ſuitable to her wiſh. She was fearful of making an inquiry reſpecting the hills ſhe had obſerved, and was equally ſhy of expreſſing any curioſity about the neighbouring towns or villages, therefore felt the neceſſity of encountering hazards, perhaps ſtill more dangerous than any ſhe had yet endured; and finally, was obliged to leave to chance, or what was better, an over-ruling Providence, for her future conduct.

She

She had now leiſure to liſten to the muſic, which again filled the hall, and broke upon the momentary ſilence which had followed Urſula's departure; and again ſhe was charmed with tones of a celeſtial ſweetneſs; ſtepping lightly therefore to the door, for the purpoſe of hearing a voice, that ſupplied with advantage the pauſe of the inſtrument, ſhe entered a gallery, and perceived what her confuſion and fatigue had before prevented, that it was hung with family portraits.

Theſe ſhe had not taſte or inclination to examine, but paſſed haſtily on 'till ſhe came to the top of the great ſtaircaſe, when looking down over the marble baluſtrade, ſhe liſtened attentively to the voice, but it ceaſing in a few minutes, ſhe was about to return to her chamber, which lay at the further end of the gallery; and as the attendants, by whom ſhe did not wiſh to be obſerved, were entirely taken up by their preſent avocations, Ella determined to look into the ſuit of rooms adjoining

joining to Urſula's; they were richly furniſhed, and evidently calculated more for ſtate than uſe. That Urſula, who ſhe now underſtood was Mortimer's houſe-keeper, ſhould occupy one ſo near her Lord's, (for it was contiguous) might have raiſed diſhonorable ſuſpicions in a boſom leſs pure than Ella's; but it was a circumſtance not worth inveſtigation.

The grandeur of its ornaments however, induced her to give it ſome degree of attention, and a picture that hung near the head of the bed, juſt catching her eye, was ſo ſingular in its appearance, as to excite a nearer examination. It was apparently intended to repreſent a magdalen, the veil partly turned back, ſo as to exhibit no more of the face than was neceſſary to delineate its character.

There was a ſtriking expreſſion in the countenance, beyond the power of mere beauty to produce: it was not altogether the compoſed

compoſed reſignation of an awakened offender, but rather a combination of guilt and horror; and the tear which hung upon her pale and hollow cheek, ſeemed more the offspring of deſpair, than repentance.

To have a more perfect view of this intereſting piece, Ella threw back the bed curtain, which being drawn forward, as if to ſhade the portrait from obſervation, obſcured the features, and as there were no windows on that ſide; ſhe gazed—ſhrunk back—claſped her hands; ——

"Holy Virgin," ſhe cried, in a broken voice, "what means this? every ſorrow I have experienced, vaniſhes before a preſentiment ſo terrible.

"Thoſe features, once ſo calm, ſo ſoft, ſo peaceful—it muſt be her—what agony—what grief—what—yes—what guilt that eye expreſſes, and in the houſe of Mortimer too."

A violent

A violent burſt of tears, occaſioned by this recollection, checked the affecting apoſtrophe, and the ſound of footſteps in the gallery, made her turn round, when a lady advancing from the door, where ſhe had been a pitying witneſs of this mournful ſcene, ſurpriſed the unhappy maid.

"Why all this diſtreſs, my ſweet girl?" aſked the attentive lady, "what can there be in a picture, to affect a youthful mind in a manner ſo extraordinary?"

Ella lifted up her tearful eye, and beheld a figure ſo majeſtic, ſo graceful, a countenance ſo pre-poſſeſſing, although ſhaded with melancholy, that ſhe bowed over the hand which was extended to raiſe from her knees the weeping creature, with ſenſations compoſed of gratitude and reverence; then caſting another look at the picture as ſhe aroſe, and ſobbing violently while ſhe ſpoke,

"O madam,

" O madam, the original of that, can I tell you," convulſively preſſing the fingers ſhe yet retained, " that ſhe was—was did I ſay;

" Yes, ſhe was indeed—a noble virtuous matron—but now—in Mortimer's bed-chamber—all her luſtre ſullied—her features no longer irradiated by the ſmile of innocence."

The poor Ella ſtop'd, her compaſſionate auditor wiping her own eyes.

" You would ſay, perhaps, my love, that the original was, or is, your ——"

" Lady Lancaſter," ſaid a voice at the door, your preſence is commanded in the ſaloon—her Highneſs inquires for you."

The Counteſs ſighed, dropped Ella's hand, and was quitting the room.

Ella

Ella looked up, wondering at the importance, couched in this half reprimand. Alas for her, it was Mortimer; his full dark eye brows drawn together, with an expreſſion of diſdain, anger and mortification,

"You do wrong," he continued, addreſſing the cringing Urſula, who ſtood behind him; "you do wrong to permit your *niece* to leave her room, 'till ſhe is ſomewhat recovered;" and then perceiving the Counteſs was retired, "Why, my adored love, do you thus give way to grief; be ſatisfied, that when my Imperial miſtreſs has left Mortimer Park, you ſhall be ſole miſtreſs of that;"—and ſuddenly checking himſelf, "that and yourſelf."

The dignity of birth, the ſpirit of affronted virtue, and the dreadful ſuſpicions a ſight of this picture had raiſed, combined to baniſh that caution, by which ſhe had hitherto been governed, and throwing upon him a glance, compoſed of the whole,

"First say," she cried, "*who* sat for that picture? was it not the noble, the distinguished—"

"The *picture*," interrupted Mortimer; "and what do *you* know of that picture?"

The ghastly stare, and trembling form of the questioner, terrified Ella in a much less degree, than the impropriety she felt herself guilty of, in thus exposing herself to the possibility of a discovery; and unable to cope with the agitation of her sinking heart, turned from him in a speechless agony.

Mortimer flew to support her, and assisted by Ursula, conveyed her to the chamber, and then descended to the company, leaving Ella not less a mystery to him, than the picture was to her.

It was some time before she was recovered, sufficient to be left alone with safety, and

and even then, her tears and ſighs were ſo vehement, as to alarm Urſula, who beſought her to calm the exceſſive anguiſh that abſolutely threatened ſuffocation, and produced from her attendant the uſual marks of ſenſibility.

" Do lay down, my dear young lady," ſaid the poor woman, " and try to get ſome reſt: indeed I pity you from my heart."

" Do you *indeed* pity me?" ſaid Ella, earneſtly preſſing her hand, " and can I truſt you?"

" Indeed you may, madam," anſwered Urſula, whoſe heart and head were not in abſolute union; " tell me what I can do for you?"

Ella conſidered a moment; it was greatly in this perſon's power not only to connive at her eſcape, but to give her directions how to

avoid the evils attending her ignorance of the road ſhe muſt take; yet there was an equal chance; ſhe might not only refuſe her help, but contribute to her preſent diſtreſſes, by informing Mortimer of her intention.

But, as if Urſula had penetrated her ſentiments, and was doubtful of her own fidelity to Mortimer, whoſe ſtrict injunctions ſhe had already received, with the poſitive denunciations of vengeance, if Ella departed without his knowledge; this ſimple inſtrument of tyrannic violence, entreated the young lady to be ſatisfied, at leaſt for the preſent, ſomewhat artfully throwing in a hint, reſpecting a caſtle not far from hence, about which the dreadfulleſt reports were continually circulating; probably that where Raymond had been alarmed by the myſterious appearance, and which, of late, was made the reſidence of a ſmall community of nuns.

Ella liſtened, but treated her information with inattention, and appearing inclined to take ſome repoſe, Urſula left her not very well aſſured of the houſe-keeper's integrity.

The gloom of the evening had now enveloped every object without the edifice; but within, all was gaiety and ſplendor. The company were yet in the dining parlour, and the ſervants had retired to the different offices.

Undetermined what plan to purſue, Ella aroſe from the pillow, which, to one in her painful circumſtances, had no charms, and ſoftly opening the door, again ventured to ſeek the ſtairs.

There was no creature in the hall; ſhe thought ſhe might deſcend, which ſhe ſilently did, and meeting with no interruption, a ſudden ſuggeſtion induced her to try if ſhe could not leave a houſe, rendered hateful by the baſeneſs of its owner.

The great door was faſt, but there was one oppoſite, which preſented, at leaſt, a chance of liberation; ſhe was lightly tripping towards it, when a noiſe at the lower end of the hall, ſtop'd her progreſs, and ſhe turned aſide to a room that opened with two grand folding doors.

Here ſhe ſtood, ſecure from preſent diſcovery, and in any other ſituation, would have examined, with delight, the faſcinating elegance that met her melancholy eye from every quarter.

The walls were covered with temporary hangings, of the richeſt velvet, that matched the curtains, which were tied back with golden cords, terminated by large taſſels.

The windows were fancifully illuminated by lamps, depending in feſtoons, and their receſſes filled with tubs and pots of the choiceſt flowers, and intermixed with little ſtands,

ſtands, on which burnt the moſt fragrant perfumes.

The cieling painted in compartments, repreſented ſcenes drawn from Ovid, while the blazing lights from all ſides, threw additional luſtre upon every charming object.

Ella ſighed, and thought of Mortimer's words; the colour roſe to crimſon in her faded cheek, when ſhe recollected his bold expectations, and vile intentions.

Surely, thought Ella, all men are not alike; would Raymond De Vallenciennes, under ſuch circumſtances, have diſtreſſed a poor creature with propoſals ſo baſe. This reflection would not bear, it was not a moment for ſenſibility to indulge. The noiſe had ceaſed, and Ella reſumed her intention, ſtepping to the door ſhe had before obſerved.

The

The bolt yielded to her unſteady hand; but there was a lock, ſhe tried it, the ſpring flew back with a ſmart ſound; another bolt was in the way, but that reſiſted her attempt to pull it back——and in this trying inſtant, the Queen, conducted by Mortimer, and followed by ſeveral ladies, quitted the dining parlour, and paſſed the door where Ella ſtood, rooted to the ground with fear and vexation, not daring to lift an eye, leſt ſhe ſhould encounter the vengeance of her perſecutor.

Urſula, who had heard the company riſe, ran into the hall, and was equally confounded with her Lord, to ſee the unfortunate girl in the very act of leaving the houſe.

"What mean you," cried he, to the frightened houſe-keeper, by ſuffering this young woman to —"

"My fair couſin," ſaid the ſarcaſtical Queen, "you do right, at leaſt, in chuſing ſuch

ſuch handſome domeſtics: pardon the interruption, but I need not be informed, that ſome myſtery intereſts you in the fate of this damſel—however, child, you may depart—his Lordſhip dare not detain you."

Ella, bending with reverence to Iſabella, who turned from Mortimer with ineffable diſdain, went immediately to the great door, and demanded to have it opened.

The ſervants, ſome of whom were again collected in the hall, appeared willing to oblige her, but before they could give into her wiſhes, their Lord approached, after he had ſeen his irritated Sovereign ſeated in the ſtately room above deſcribed; when waving his hand, they inſtantly departed, and the diſappointed girl, knowing it was then impoſſible to effect her purpoſe, turned in ſullen ſilence from the ſoft and ſmooth apologies he attempted, as an excuſe for a conduct, mean and ungenerous.

Taking

Taking therefore Urſula's arm, ſhe once more aſcended to her chamber, too timid to inſiſt upon her liberation, and doubting if the Queen herſelf, could protect her from his power.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.